"Where there is no vision the people perish"

OCTOBER 1944 DECEMBER

The Poetry Review

THE GREENWOOD PRIZE POEM

TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE NET

(Enlarged Edition)

(Annual Postal Subscription, 9s. 6d.; U.S.A., 2 Dollars)

The Journal of The Poetry Society (Incorporated) and a magazine of general poetic interest published in England bi-monthly by

THE POETRY SOCIETY (INCORPORATED), 33 Portman Square, London, W.1

American Editorial Office: 299 Park Avenue, New York

Trade Agents: The Rolls House Publishing Co. Ltd., 2 Breams Buildings, E.C.4

"The leading poetry magazine of the world . . . of international eminence"
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THE POETRY REVIEW

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All literary communications should be addressed to the Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.C.1. No MSS. can be considered or returned unless accompanied by stamped addressed envelope. The Editor accepts no responsibility for the safe custody or return of any MS.

Printed in Great Britain by Diemer & Reynolds Ltd., 26-30 Midland Road, Bedford, and Published by the Proprietors, The Poetry Society (Incorporated), at 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, England.

LAZARUS

DEAD, and believe it you! though now the doctors
look wise and, murmuring "Catalepsy," shake their heads:
to die? to sleep? small difference when sleep's so deep!
buried, that's certain: four days and three nights in the tomb;
and that I was wrapped in grave-clothes, that I know:
for when I was again alive—or again awake,
as the doctors have it—I felt the sisterly hands
of Martha and Mary unwind the cerements from me:
from chin the chin-strap, that clamps the teeth so fast
shut on death's secret; from eyes the bandage, though still
I kept my eyes fast shut. Terrible enough,
after the total dark of death, that red
flaming curtain from zenith to horizon falling,
that veil of newly pulsing sun-smitten blood
my eyelids hung between the world and me:
terrible enough that dazzling anguish, without
daring direct vision! And then I felt
neighbourly hands that clothed me with fresh garments . . .
how light, how easy, the flowing vestures of life,
after death's stiff habiliments! Yes, I was dead
and four days entombed: four days had I known liberation
from joy, pain, hope and regret; I lay as quiet
as the quiet stone on which my body rested,
and, at first, senseless, mindless, as the very stone:
utterly cold—all heat of living extinct,
all fire of desire and passion long since ashes,
with not even a thin wisp of the smoke of thought.
At first . . . but gradually consciousness—moon through mist,
to the clear sunlight of conscious living—returned:
shadowless, an equable attention, diffused, indifferent,
lacking all like and dislike. As from some point
of remote vantage, withdrawn, I now looked back
on the arrested pageant of my thirty-five years of living,
my brief mortality; rapidly scanned it, as a man
with a glance lightly skims a familiar story—
here and there a phrase, and often a single word
that evokes in all its detail a whole episode.
I saw myself with my sisters, Martha and Mary,
a child among children, playing in the streets of Bethany,
or with a stick in the dust of the school courtyard
tracing my Aleph, Beth, Gimel; then as a boy
wandering alone through the shadowy groves of Olivet;
as a growing lad reciting the psalms of David,
or amazed in Jerusalem, awe-struck upon Mount Moriah;
and now as a young man, and again wandering
through the groves of olives . . . no longer alone. But so cold
was the light of that vision, so remote that familiar story,
that not one throb, one sigh of love's nostalgia,
troubled my peace—death's peace—as I looked once more

on the face of my bride, or felt her lips in the very
ghost of a kiss. I saw myself as a man
plying my trade—my children playing about me,
retouching as with clear brushes my faded infancy;
my old ambitions, my dreams, revisited me:
for my sons, ambitions proud as the cedars of Lebanon,
for my daughters, dreams sweet as the grapes of Eshcol.
Again I looked at my father, dead before me,
without one tremor . . . at my mother, dead before me,
without one tear; and again I, who had wept
days together in inconsolable grief,
closed with untrembling hands my wife's dead eyes,
while from my living eyes not one tear fell:
for the dead weep not, no tremor assails his heart,
no trembling his hands, who lies at rest in the grave.
The days and the months passed, and my grief grew gentle,
and gently the years passed; Martha and Mary
dwelt with me here in the old house at Bethany,
I plied my trade, my children grew up around me.
And again I lived that memorable hour, when Mary
—'twas a summer afternoon, and the shadows lay back in the street—
brought to the door of our house Jesus of Galilee.
There in the doorway he stood, a tall, gaunt figure;
against the black of the shadows the pallor of his face
and his white garments made a diffused radiance . . .
then he entered and spoke, blessed me and all the house,
came and sat down, and Mary sat with us—but Martha,
thoughtful of others, fetched meat and drink for our guest.
That moment, O friends, alone among all life's moments,
now seen once more in the rapid summary of death,
sent me again its authentic message: a challenge
flashed from the crowded past to the empty present,
the challenge of a future unguessed by the past or the present.
All the rest of my static pageant of years,
though I knew it mine, might have been, for all I troubled,
the story of another's life; this, this was personal:
a signal from deep unto deep of essential spirit,
one look from his soul to mine: a look that pierced
all barriers of time, all life, all death: a look
charged with the silence that reigns beyond life and death,
terrible with the sword-like splendour of ultimate truth.
Calmly and quickly the few remaining months
passed quietly—Jesus had gone again into Galilee;
I saw myself fallen sick with my last sickness,
tossing in burning slumbers, muttering, delirious,
afire with fever, afire with fierce anxiety
for my children's welfare and future, my dreams and ambitions
quivering like figures of smoke thwart-blown by the wind.
I looked at my own dead body; I felt them washing it;
I felt them wrap it in grave-clothes; I heard my sisters'

despair, my children's weeping, my friends' lamentation ;
and Mary crying aloud : O if only Jesus
had stayed, our brother Lazarus would not have died !
But Martha, even then, was busy and thoughtful of others,
thoughtful of those who came to wash me, of those
who wrapped my body in grave-clothes, of those who bore it
to the shelf in the cave and closed the cave with a stone.
That was the last picture of my book of life,
the book I had read rapidly through, and now
closed for ever. This was my life as a man,
lived, finished and done with : its good and its evil
alike things of the past, things irrevocable ;
its hopes and its fears ended ; the scroll rolled up,
stored away in the achives of God's memory,
and my concern no more. For I was dead :
and what is death but the curt denial of life ?
a reversal of all its intentions ? the total cancelling
of all its values ? Now might the axes fell
all the pride of Lebanon, I should not grieve ; and the storm
strip the vineyards of Eshcol, I should not complain.
The past and the future were alike to me indifferent ;
I was all present, and held my past and my future
like the two ends of a rod between my hands—
the measuring-rod that measures all human worth.
For I was dead. Now, like a finished music,
the last recollection faded ; only one image,
like a note sustained after the music is finished,
still persisted : the face of Jesus—his eyes
as that day at Bethany they looked so long into mine,
and the faint prophetic smile that troubled his lips.
Four days—so men assure me—dead and buried . . .
it might have been four years, or four thousand years !
though time still moved, but moved in a new direction :
not parallel now with the passage of our earthly journey,
rather away from it, so that the glance which traversed it
was a fixed stare. The scroll of my life, rolled up,
beginning to end, bulked like a solid object ;
its yesterdays, to-days, to-morrows, equally present . . .
equally distant : for now swiftly my spirit
withdrew. It seemed . . . or I dreamed—what dreams may come ?—
that I lay alone, naked on a stony pinnacle,
aloft in the hollows of space and infinite night ;
this rock upheld me, gave me identity : my soul
was the crown of its growth, its base my being and root.
Distant immensely, like a great wheel's circumference,
—and I at the silent centre—the life of the world,
the circle of birth and death, in endless monotony
spun at the rims of existence ; and I knew, without seeing,
that my own life, my pageant of thirty-five years,
a minute fragment, spun past on the racing edge.

But I, beyond life, remote, at the silent centre
lay without motion : all interests now withdrawn,
my spirit's filaments snapped and retreating inward,
till even the far-off hum of the blind circumference,
the hum of the mingled myriad voices of time,
died, and the last silence encroached upon me.
And in that silence I heard the whisper of water,
the hush of a shoreless ocean swiftly rising,
swiftly ascending my rocky flanks of identity ;
darker the darkness grew, while the wind, colder
than the breath of the wintry Taurus, blew upon me.
I felt my body stiffen, my very mind
froze to a field of icy phantasms. Long since,
all passion spent, the genial movements of thought
had passed like a slow procession of floating shadows . . .
now, the very shadows froze. Images,
drained of their human meanings, grew fixed before me,
hollow simulacra—till even these succumbed,
like wind-arabesques on the desert sands at nightfall,
to the infiltration of the all-pervasive dark.
Night, and the sea, and the awful wind of death
closed upon me ; I felt the first cold ripple
of the tide against my flesh ; my heart contracted ;
my mind shrank in to a bare point of being . . .
Suddenly, I heard a voice, shattering the darkness,
splitting the silence as an axe cleaves a tree :
Lazarus, come forth ! and immediately powerful hands
—O, not of men !—lifted me. I seemed to float
on a miraculous current of air, till gently I stood
erect, felt under the soles of my feet firm earth,
and on my face the strange heat of the sun.
Now sisterly hands unwound the cerements from me,
from my chin the chin-strap, the bandage that bound my eyes . . .
unaccustomed, terrible light seared my eyeballs !
quick as I could with my stiff joints, I covered
my blinded eyes with my hands ; little by little
let the new splendour filter between my fingers,
till I could bear unshrinking the fiery curtain
of sun-suffused blood. Then, when the pain had lessened
—I felt like the High Priest when he lays his hand
on the great veil of the Temple—I raised my lids
slowly, and, dazed, looked out upon a new world.
But in that glory—O Light after death's darkness !—
only one thing I looked upon, one thing I saw :
his face, as he stood gazing upon me—his face,
familiar of old, yet now indescribably changed.
Have you not known a moment when the earth put off
her familiar visage, as a snake sloughs its skin ?
It may be but a fringe of trees against the skyline
when the sun has set, dark-etched on the soaring rose ;

or the posts of a gateway across the street, kindled
to pillars of burning gold by the mid-day fire ;
or the crown and noble flanks of the Mount of Olives . . .
familiar companions of our daily seeing, yet now
suddenly seen anew with a piercing clarity :
those are the trees that fringe the frontiers of Paradise !
no gate of Solomon's Temple, for all its beauty,
shone like those pillars of fire—O gate to what Temple ?—
while Olivet's sweep and rise, in the splendour of dawn,
is the very Hill of the Lord ! The unchanged is changed :
drenched with significance—shot through and through with light
beyond all the sun ever gave—touched by an air
more buoyant, more sweet, more strong than the wind of morning ;
the puzzle-pieces of life have flashed together ;
the complete pattern blazes ; a word is spoken
to answer for ever the deep doubts of the soul.
So I saw him, Jesus the Galilean,
the same, and yet never the same : the edge of a Sword
whose pommel is held in the very grasp of Deity :
in the midst of time's roaring seas the naked Rock
of Eternal Life : the rigid Axis of Love
round which the Universe spins like a whirling wheel . . .
the infinite Light of God focused in Man
and Man burnt up and renewed in the furnace of God,
and of them Twain one Being—God and Man.
So I saw him, my friend, Jesus of Galilee,
as amazed we looked at each other—he, too, was amazed— :
the smile on his lips, no longer prophetic, now flashed
triumphant certainty ; but in his eyes—those eyes
that flame through Heaven and Earth, aye, and Hell also,
riddling Creation with the arrows of absolute knowledge—
burned, as they stared into mine, an unanswered question ;
as if I—I, Lazarus—knew the one thing
hidden from him : for I had been dead and buried,
and now was alive again, while for him that secret
still dwelt in the future, gathering fast and unknown.

J. Redwood Anderson.

THE GREENWOOD PRIZE FOR 1945

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for 1945 for the best single poem in open competition addressed "The Greenwood Premium, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1," before July 1st ; only one poem to be submitted by any one competitor, length not exceeding 250 lines ; no previously-published poem may be entered ; full name and address of author must be given on each poem and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed. (If a *nom-de-plume* is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym.) The winning poem shall be printed in The Poetry Review and may be reprinted at the discretion of The Poetry Society, and the adjudicator may reserve near winners for publication in The Poetry Review.

THE 1944 SHIRLEY CARTER LEIGH GREENWOOD POEM COMPETITION

REPORT AND AWARD

THERE were fewer entries for the Greenwood Prize than last year, but considerably more good long poems were sent in. Last year, with the exception of the half-dozen set aside for the prize, the best poems were nearly all short, of from twelve to forty lines. This year very few of the short poems have been worth reading twice.

By far the best lyric was "Keen," submitted by Miss A. G. Piggot, and next to it "Called Up" by Gilbert Chadwick. Other poems of superior quality under fifty lines in length are "Out of the Starry Maze" (rhymed iambics) by the well-known American poet Stanton A. Coblentz, and "From the Siberian Steppes" (powerful free verse) by Miss Jennifer R. Clark. But the maximum number of lines allowed was two hundred and fifty, and a great many of the poems approached this limit. Two of the longest have quite clearly come out on the top: "Lazarus" by J. Redwood Anderson (a distinguished poet of long standing), and "Eden" by H. Herman Chilton. After very careful consideration of the various merits of each I have decided that the prize ought to be given to J. REDWOOD ANDERSON.

His "Lazarus" is a skilful piece of creation in blank verse of a new kind (more or less his own invention)—anapaestic pentameter, with very many variations, particularly syncopation. He is not quite the first poet who has introduced anapaests into normal blank verse (I have done it myself), but is the first, as far as I am aware, who has done it with so much continuity, variety and lengthening effect. Without this information I think the average prosody-conscious reader would take the metre for iambic hexameter springing from an iambic pentameter platform. Also, there is little doubt that Mr. Anderson has been unconsciously influenced by his knowledge of the Latin hexameter, for he is a sound classical scholar. As regards English verse no living poet knows more about the technical construction and elastic possibilities of blank verse than does Redwood Anderson, and I doubt if anyone since the death of Robert Bridges has ever known quite as much. But "Lazarus" is much more than a highly-skilled "piece of work." It is an actual poem—subtle, profound, revealing, beautiful, consoling, moving, and even a little terrifying. It has all these qualities at different moments, but triumphs as a thing of complete unity, and though somewhat lacking in pregnant phrase and Elizabethan colour, seems to grow better and more revealing every time I read it.

"Lazarus" quite clearly reaches out a finger to the best things in major poetry, but "Eden," in more conventional metre and diction, is chiefly saved from the minor note by the argument of Satan, for the poem is little more than captivating verbal embroidery of the Bible myth. It charms and convinces the poetical and aesthetic faculties by virtue of its fine shapeliness, something inevitable in the simple but ornate diction, and the skill displayed in an unusual rhyme arrangement.

But a very beautiful and clever poem which lags only a little behind Herman Chilton's creation is an emotional and philosophic conception of the seasons entitled "The Years Fulfilled" by Mrs. Dorothy Gibson.

Other top runners-up are "The Ballad of the Eglantine" by Greta Briggs, "The Way Home" by W. Wall, "The Nameless Warrior" by Leopold Spero, "Sextet to Thought" by one "Mercator," "Fire and Ice" by T. W. Ramsey, "King Edward and the Hermit" by Kenneth Hare, "In the Canteen" by Arthur W. Ball, "Resurrection" by Frances Heneage Burkitt, "Alpha and Omega" by Ethel Walker, "The Feast" by Matilda Snow, "The Tale to the Firelight" by Hubert Riley, "The Patchwork Quilt" by Miss A. V. Stuart, and "The Seer" by Florence M. Bradford.

Two other poems which seem to have the flavour and quality of the best are "A New Ode to St. Cicely" by J. W. G. Heaven, and "The Flame-Bearer" (a short play in ornate blank verse, with a few lyrics) by T. E. Casson. But neither of them is easy to read. The first is handwritten in an uneven flourishing style that is not always angelically legible, and the second set out in very blurred typescript. It must be remembered that when hundreds of MSS. have to be read and judged in the space of a few weeks, it is imperative that they should appeal quickly and easily to the eye.

As regards Greta Briggs I flattered myself that I had discovered a poet of budding power, but found after setting aside her contribution that she had already been discovered by Lord Wavell. In fact, she is the only recent modern whom he has included in his exciting anthology *Other Men's Flowers* which, as far as I am aware, contains no verse by any other poet who put in a first appearance after the Armistice of 1918. But she is a somewhat derived poet, her "Ballad of the Eglantine," appetisingly cooked-up Kiplingese; but she has something to say, has metrical power and skill, and writes felicitous phrases and sentences.

The poems by Anderson, Herman Chilton and Greta Briggs belong to what is known as narrative verse, that is they tell a tale. To them add a spicy legend in rhyme by Kenneth Hare, "The King and the Hermit," and sub-titled "A Legend of the Cotswolds." But I am not so sure that the legend belongs exclusively to the Cotswolds. It was told by William Hazlitt in his *National Tales and Legends* (a volume that cries out to be reprinted) and introduced by Scott into *Ivanhoe,* which he wrote in a bower of the garden of Coleorton Hall on the edge of Charnwood Forest (a sort of continuation of Sherwood Forest) in Leicestershire, where he got most of his atmosphere for the novel. The chief adverse criticism I would make about Kenneth Hare's very deft poem is that it is a little too frivolous, the amoral quality of the tale becoming (in one part) slightly immoral in his hands. But what else can one expect from a poet whose best known lyric (*vide* several anthologies) is "The Puritan"—of which this is the whole:

> The Puritan through life's sweet garden goes
> To pluck the thorn and cast away the rose,
> And hopes to please by this peculiar whim
> The God who fashioned it and gave it him.

Of the nature of narrative poetry is "The Patchwork Quilt" by Miss A. V. Stuart—a sensitive realistic description of death-bed memories, written in good blank-verse, showing the influence of both Browning and the later Shakespeare. Another is "The Seer" (in rhymed iambics) by Florence M. Bradford—a strange visionary poem about reincarnation, the Book of Daniel and the present day.

A very different kind of poem is "The Way Home," which the handwritten manuscript betrays as the work of a self-educated man, and one who has had to compete with dire and defeating circumstances. But it has moved and intrigued me, for Mr. W. Wall is clearly a natural poet. I specially like the beginning:

> In silence I stood by the lonely lake,
> By the dark edge, where the soft waters break.
> The moon, pure virgin, worshipped on high
> Before the vast altar of the evening sky,
> Whilst from her white shoulders, in lovely cascade,
> Her train, to my feet, a bright stair-way was laid.

The contributions by Leopold Spero and Arthur Ball are in less lilting accents, but of entirely different texture and content. Spero's "The Nameless Warrior" (a very interesting rhetorical poem in dialogue, written with feeling and sincerity) espouses

the cause of the Jew, and pleads for a strong Zionism and more recognition of the Jew as an asset to the armed forces. The blank verse follows Milton, but though metrically faultless it tends, in place, to be a little prosy and cliché-ridden. All the same it does sometimes rise to Milton's organ note, and every now and again says something striking and pregnant, as, for instance :

> But we
> Are still the ancient, stubborn breed we were.
> Who conquers us ? What Empire of the earth
> That once oppressed us, lives to tell the tale ?

Arthur Ball's rough, realistic, Browningesque "In the Canteen" gets nearer to prose in an oral sense, and is chiefly saved therefrom by the division of the strange verse into four-lined stanzas and the introduction of a curious technical device—a single cross-rhyme, the last word of the second stanza rhyming with some word inside the fourth. However, here is one of the best stanzas :

> But there were hungry glances here and there,
> Hungry for something that could not come on plates
> Across the canteen counter. Home stands clear
> To the eyes, but distance grates, and pain's in the brooding eyes.

The fourth line of each stanza has affinities with Redwood Anderson's technical display and is either anapaestic pentameter (with syncopation) or hexameter. It is an odd performance, the end-rhyming of last lines in the stanzas hardly catching the ear.

Entirely different are two religious poems, "Alpha and Omega" (superb in its two opening stanzas) by Ethel Walter, and "Resurrection" (an emotional poem of Hope, constructed in original short-lined rhythms, and perhaps the equal of Dorothy Gibson's) by Frances Heneage Burkitt.

The most cerebral of the poems of high quality are "Sextet to Thought" (a Petrarchan sonnet-sequence) by "Mercator" and "Fire and Ice" by T. W. Ramsey, a poet of many years' standing, one who has already published several good books of verse and not yet received the recognition which is his due.

But there are two poems which have charmed and hypnotised me more than some of those defined and described. I refer to "The Feast" by Miss Matilda Snow, and "The Tale to the Firelight" by Hubert Riley. Both are touched with magic and both are haunting. But what are they really about ? I imagine that neither THE POETRY REVIEW nor the benevolent spirit-hand of Mrs. Greenwood wish to give prizes to surrealism or poems strongly influenced by the capers of the oddest of the French Symbolists ; and remembering what a friendly critic in the *New Statesman* wrote about me in 1934 (on the publication of my longest book of verse, *Summit and Chasm*) : "Tradition, however, is not safe in Mr. Palmer's hands. He has found for himself what others are looking for, but is unaware of the fact that in doing so he has managed to upset the entire apple-cart," remembering all that, I sometimes have to be extra careful, for though revelation is good for the soul, and you may set a thief to catch a thief, and tradition is not without its defects, and so on, and so on, something may sometimes work to the upsetting of the wrong apple-cart. And therefore I take the mean between two extremes, and refuse to be too beguiled by either opposite ends of the pencil. For instance, Matilda Snow's "The Feast" begins ironically and magically in the best manner of Kipling and the paradoxical Chesterton :

> Who would work for the people ? The people that sway and rave ?
> He would dig in the rainbow, and build with the bricks of the wave :
> He who would harness the eagles and plough in the mountain's white ;
> He who would look on the day-star, and keep unwinking his sight.

But then she tells us that the men who become slaves to Pharaoh or make slaves for Pharaoh shall "joy in the work for aye"; while here and there occur lines and short passages as odd and obscure as these:

> And we go to the old dear battle, to the gates that before we braved,
> With the people's faith unavailing, the people's treachery saved.

All the same, one admirable stanza stands out dawn-clear; though in view of the real character of Barabbas and the oblique references to Hitler, Mussoline and Fascism, it is a pity that "good men of the people" had not been written "strong men of the people."

> They have digged a hole on the hilltop, they have lifted the tree on high,
> Two good men of the people, and one of the two must die;
> One of summer and sunshine, a hand to assure and heal,
> And one of the winter's venture, the ring of the frosty steel;
> One to kiss and to worship, and one to hear and obey;
> For ever now and for ever, the people shall choose to-day;
> For Rome, the mother of nations, in her wisdom will always give
> A toy to quieten the people; and one of the two shall live.

But the complete meaning of most of the other stanzas escapes me, and the poem as a whole fails to communicate anything definite. The same with the nostalgic and lovely "Tale to the Firelight" by Hubert Riley, which begins:

> Tell your tale to the firelight as children do:
> Really there is no one else to tell it to
> Since I went down to the green valley by the sycamore
> And you watcht and waved your hand to me from the cottage door,
> And I paused at the mill corner to wave back to you.

And ends:

> How unintelligible this tale—if tale it be—must seem
> To whom the sunflower and the hollyhock are things to grow not dream;
> To whom the cadent rhythm in the year's fulfilment brings
> Not memories, not tears—even the tears of things—
> But change of topic, diet, domicile, régime!
>
> "This tale," said I? Well, dear, you know, and better none than you,
> But tell it to the firelight as we children used to do,
> And make the shutters fast lest the criss-cross of the bars
> Should lead you from the firelight to look beyond the stars—
> And there's nothing worth returning to, my dear.

It is full of recondite symbolism and private allusion; so that Mr. Riley has certainly told his tale to the firelight, though the lady of his heart may be considerably less mystified. But it is a triumph of wavering rhythm and beautiful cadence and phrase, and stands head, shoulders and waist above most of the recent delirium and nonsense poetry of its kind (the D.T. school). Technically I would give it nearly full marks; and one of the stanzas, I think, will stick in my head for a long time:

> Yes, I called your eyes the windows through which I read the sky;
> I used to lean and plumb the depth of blue to prophesy
> That after years of plenty would come long years of dearth
> With War and Tribulation to stalk the hungry Earth:
> "But never mind, my dear," I'd say, "we'll let the years roll by!"

Other poems that ought to be specially mentioned are "Inherit the Earth" by Douglas Gibson, "The Secret Disciple" (a religious sonnet-sequence) by "Hugh

Inman," "Crusade" by Captain John Waller, "To-morrow" by John M. Worth, "Reaper" by Mrs. Holmes, "Three Autumn Studies on a Black Note" (a long love rhapsody that might be turned into a very fine poem if only its exuberance were disciplined and its length reduced to about half or two-thirds) by Thomas Astore, "Year's Wane" by the New Zealand poet, Mary R. Greig, "The Song" by Brenda G. Macrow, "Dream for To-morrow (an ode) by the American poet, K. Duncan, "The English Muse" (good virile satire of modernist poetry, with a bad recurrent line, "What the hell has age got to do with it ?") by Stuart Scott, "St. George's Day" by Dorothy Rose, "Crépuscule" by "Wilfred Barry," "Symphonie Pathetique" (a verse translation of Tchaikovsky's Symphonie No. 6, with a strong blank verse opening) by Robert E. Horsfall, "Per Hominem ad Deum" (an uneven poem with a very fine opening) by Gladys Ward, "The Kingdom of God" (rhymed modern theology and religious criticism) by John Sayes, "A Day in Hospital" by Rachel E. Boulton, "The Branch" (a weird, uneven, but rather convincing blank-verse poem, nearly in the first class) by Charles Woodhouse, "Chester Cathedral" by the American poet, Miss Ella Mason, "Margaret and the Miner" (a conscious or unconscious imitation of an old street broad-sheet ballad of the better kind) by H. L. Senior. And somewhat shorter or considerably shorter : "The Fool Hath Said" (a powerful war lyric) by Peter Hadley, "Defence Area" by Mary Mair, "Dreams" by Mrs. M. E. B. Mitchell, "The Wind and the Island" by Margaret Hamilton, "The Old Rectory" by Elspeth Riley-Smith, and "Crucifixion" by Raymond Tong. Those forty and more poems constitute the cream, or at least nine-tenths of the cream.

Most of the poems submitted were in rhyme, but there was more blank verse than free verse or prose verse—which I was pleased about. It is largely owing to the decline of blank verse (most frequent and natural of English verse forms) that modernism has been able to secure such a strong foothold, for, though there is such a thing as poetical free verse, modernism in its most disintegrating aspects obeys no laws of rhythm and logic. One of the better poems, which I commend for its good general content and telling sentences rather than for its shape, now and again flaunts the worst and most artificial mannerisms of the moderns, but occasionally drifts from prose verse into blank verse, as here :

> When all this fighting so little understood
> Has come to its last tired end, remember the Past
> And all those who in a few years lost
> Life, the joy of life, and the sweetness of it,
> Joy of the kiss, the son, or the friend at the side,
> Ghosts of brightness, beliefs, the smile in the wood,
> Joy of magicians, memories, games on the grass,
> All rivers leading to new and most colourful good,
> And throbbing time ever ticking, the constant clock.

Now, the first of these lines is in prose, the second is metrical (blank verse), the third is in prose, the fourth is in prose unless you heavily stress the final word, and the rest is in good blank verse (*i.e.*, unrhymed iambic pentameter) which accidently encloses two rhymed lines. If the whole creation had only been written in blank verse and modern mannerisms deleted it might have come out as an exceptionally good poem. As it stands it too closely resembles a fair child that has been "stillborn."

The competition has again proved itself highly successful, and again we ought to feel ourselves much indebted to the spirit of Mrs. Greenwood. The competition is an annual affair that will go on, and we hope will bring to light many poets both new and old who have been smothered by modern conditions of literary journalism and

criticism. The fact that fewer poems were submitted than last year means no more than that the rules have been made more stringent, while owing to national developments fewer people have had time to compete. HERBERT PALMER.

EDEN

IN the beginning God created man
In His own image, and for dwelling place
Gave him a garden where a river ran,
Like to an azure ribbon flecked with lace,
By meadows lush and many a leafy bower,
Past glimpses of inexplicable grace;
Where every luscious fruit and lovely flower
Patterned the view like variegated gems,
Dropped by the bounty of Almighty power.

Magnolias wore their blooms as diadems,
The lotus sheltered in sequestered dells,
And roses blossomed upon thornless stems:
Above the crocuses and asphodels
Oranges flaunted, and the creeping vine
Hid the profusion of its purple bells.

Fruitage there was of every kind, in fine,
For one bland season reigned the whole year through,
No winter withered the sublime design:
Exotic birds of every shape and hue
Lodged in the trees to recompense the eye;
Among the branches thrush and blackbird flew . . .

At dawn the lark winged upward to the sky,
In music, and when night sank on her nest
The bulbul tuned his restful lullaby.

And man was happy, for the Lord had blest
His advent utterly beyond his ken,
Crowning him master over all the rest.

Adam was happy, save that now and then
Loneliness folded him in sombre moods,
Wanting the sympathy of other men;
For all the creatures in the teeming woods
Each had a mate, and reproduced his kind,
Whereas he roamed through alien solitudes.

But, since each concept of the finite mind
Is manifest to the Omnipotent,
And if unuttered is no less divined,
God of His wisdom and in mercy, bent
To Adam's need, and him he stupefied,
Helpless as matter and as nescient.

Then plucked a riblet from the sleeper's side
Healing the open wound, and clothed the bone
In living flesh and left it beautified;

A perfect woman unawakened, prone
Beside her mate till he should rouse and claim
This crown and complement to be his own.

At dawn invaded by a mutual aim
They looked upon each other with amaze,
Their nakedness a glory void of shame . . .
He saw her loveliness, the modest gaze
Of limpid eyes where innocence was shrined,
The artless candour of a woman's ways;
Marked the suave, harmonious, undefined
Lines of her body which no harshness marred,
Foresaw the promise of a kindred mind.

She looked upon his stature, stalwart, hard
With health and vigour; on the shoulders broad
Above lean flanks, his masterful regard:
She knew herself excelled, and this her lord
To serve and cherish while they both should live
Without disloyalty or disaccord:
And in that moment, swift and fugitive,
Love made them one, as two converging streams
Mingle their waters to receive and give.

Happy they were beyond all human dreams,
Wise as the truly innocent are wise
Whom no false beacon beckons with its beams.

They ranged the avenues of Paradise
Drank when athirst, ate whatsoe'er they craved,
Slept, as sweet languor closed their tired eyes.

Alert at the first blush of dawn they braved
The crystal stream to cleanse them from all stain,
Bartering fond derisions while they laved;
And thence returning, re-awakened, fain
To hunger, they did pluck the luscious loot
Hanging in clusters for their entertain.

Yet of a single tree, whereof the root
Was grounded deep and in the midst of all,
The Lord forbade them to enjoy the fruit:
Lest, learning overmuch, their steps should fall
From grace, and ruin be the aftermath
Beyond forgiveness as beyond recall.

But loving God, and fearful of His wrath,
They shunned the emblem of surpassing ill,
Sought their adventures by another path . . .

Then for a pastime they began to till
The virgin soil, source of unfailing joy,
Rich in rewards to recompense their skill:
And the dear fellowship of such employ

Twined them yet closer in complete accord,
A flawless sympathy without alloy.

Often whenas the noontide radiance poured
Upon the scene, they sought a grateful shade
Lost in oblivion on the downy sward :
If Eve awakened first she sometimes strayed
An hour alone, a truant from his side,
Watching the humbler creatures undismayed
Or sought in playful mood where she might hide
Till Adam found her, when in childish glee
They changed the order and were satisfied.

Thus on a day she crept beneath a tree
Whose branches drooped about her like a tent,
Calling his name in sportive mockery :
No other thought was hers, no ill intent,
Only a longing for her absent mate,
Since she was ignorant what evil meant.

But overhead the serpent lay in wait,
Coil upon coil, and slithered down to her
Until he lay beside her where she sate.

Nowise affrighted she did hardly stir ;
She gazed upon him and her smile was bland,
Saw nothing dangerous or sinister ;
Indeed she laid an unreluctant hand
Upon the pointed head, raised to deceive,
Owning his speckled beauty, band on band :
Yet snatched it backward when he murmured . . . *Eve,*
Be not astonied by my gift of speech,
I tell a marvel you may scarce conceive :
Out of my ignorance I come to teach
Wisdom surpassing your imaginings,
Open a prospect still beyond your reach.

God made me meanest of created things
To trail a sordid furrow in the dust,
Bereft of supple limbs or soaring wings :
But I, rebelling at a bane unjust,
Dared disobedience of the high decree,
Gained me the faculty which you distrust.

For hardly had I eaten of the tree
Than my mute tongue was loosed, as you behold ;
Knowledge and wisdom were vouchsafed to me :
And if to me, whose sluggish blood runs cold,
What shall be granted unto godlike man,
Already dowered with bounties manifold ?

To dust you must return as you began,
Mere offal for the worms to feast withal
When time has counted the allotted span . . .

Yet immortality is in your call,
The tree of life bears fruit as marvellous
For such as have the heart to hazard all.

Whereon he left her, still impervious,
But rent by doubt unto the inmost core,
Her mind distracted between thus and thus . . .

Then, near demented by his evil lore,
Upright she stood upon compelling feet,
A woman tranced yet hesitant no more ;
Swept on a wave of uttermost deceit
She reached the tree, pulling the ripest there,
Bit in its cloying substance and did eat.

A thrill went through her limbs, as though the air
Imparted the fell potency of wine,
Mingled with premonitions of despair . . .
Troubled, she waited for some inward sign
While carnal images confused her brain
Daunted already by its rash design.

Then Adam was beside her, of the twain
The more bewildered, and his look was stern,
Heavy with accusation and dull pain :
Swift was her woman's instinct to discern
The change, but swifter still the stark alarm
That moved her to confession : in return
She slid about him a voluptuous arm,
Straining him wildly as she sobbed his name,
And felt his anger wilt beneath her charm :
Whereat he yielded to a kindred flame
Like an elixir in the surging blood,
Ready to share her passion or the blame.

Eat, she implored, whether for ill or good,
Since we are one in substance as in mind
Shall we forsake our common hardihood ?

And Adam ate, even the acid rind
To pleasure her, and with it her demean
Waxed slowly brighter, comforted, resigned.

But the incalculable, unforeseen,
Smote them : for, overwhelmed, they saw
Their nakedness, once pure, become unclean !

And fled in horror to a nearby haw,
Hid like a pair of undiscovered thieves,
Tasted the first-fruit of an outraged law.

She made them aprons of inwoven leaves
To mask their guilt, and mingling bitter tears
They grieved as only true repentance grieves.

At that, oh complement of awesome fears !
The measured voice of God pierced their retreat
Like music wafted from the distant spheres :
Solemn and sad, but yet unearthly sweet
For ears attuned to its divine appeal ;
Stern to the guilty, at the judgment seat.

Adam where art thou ? And for woe or weal
Perforce the craven answered from his shade . . .
Lord, I have sheltered hither to conceal
My nakedness, since I am sore afraid !
The voice replied, and oh its tone was hard !
Who told thee Adam, why art thou dismayed ?

Thou hast partaken of the fruit debarred,
Rifled a secret that will serve thee ill ;
Speak, ere I tell thee of thy just reward . . .
The woman that thou gavest me, to fill
My cup of bliss, in whom all graces meet,
Tempted my weakness and seduced my will.

Out of the agony of their defeat
Eve gained a courage to make good her plea,
The serpent cozened me and I did eat !

Then the Lord cursed the snake, that he should be
Vilest among the vile, a thing of dread,
The emblem of all earthly treachery ;
Man he condemned to labour for his bread,
With soulless nature evermore at feud,
Rueing the wisdom he had coveted :
And Eve He sentenced to bring forth her brood
In pain and sorrow ; and to Adam's rule
Bade her submit her wayward womanhood.

Thus from the garden with its wonderful
Beneficence of every fruit and bloom,
Its sunlit groves, it shadows soft and cool,
He banished them to meet an unknown doom
Beyond the portals, in the wilderness,
As yet chaotic, in primeval gloom.

Yet gave them skins of animals for dress
Lest they should perish of the winter cold,
Or suffer through their helpless nakedness.

Oh but their step was slow, and manifold
The griefs that waited on the last farewell,
As they drew near the fatal gates of gold,
That opened as though motioned by a spell ;
Paused for a moment while they wept their fate,
Clanged with the sadness of a passing bell !

Rigid they stood awhile hard by the gate,
With unbelieving eyes upon the bourne

Wild past conception, savage, inchoate,
That henceforth must embrace them night and morn;
Its tangled growths, its pathless secrecies,
A world in labour and not fully born.

No gorgeous plumage flashed among the trees,
No luscious fruit hung from the twisted boughs,
No mating song was wafted on the breeze;
Only the cries of carrion birds to rouse
The echoes, or the minatory rage
Of beasts, tracking their prey amid the sloughs.

. . . . . .

Such is the myth, dispersed from age to age,
From shore to shore; that tells why good and ill
Haunt man throughout his weary pilgrimage;
Troubling his purpose, his inconstant will,
With their eternal, unremitting war,
The splendid visions which he might fulfil.

Yet this of truth is latent in the lore
That gathers round a fabled paradise
Man lost and can recapture nevermore . . .

Mute is the distant heaven whereto he cries,
And his alone the task to make or mar
A human Eden underneath the skies,
Himself its architect and Avatar!

H. Herman Chilton.

THE YEARS FULFILLED

Part I

SPRING

THE old earth quivered and awoke, the sky
Rippled with calm translucent light, and dust
Was driven by the grey March winds that shook
Dark elms. The harsh uncompromising crust
Of the black fields threw up a tiny spark
Of emerald, and one by one the leaves
Of oak and lime and sycamore uncurled
And swallows nested in the cottage eaves.
Once more the violent agony of birth,
The ecstasy that follows after pain,
Once more the patient old unwearied earth
Becomes the kingdom of the young again.
And virgin white and pure the blossom blows,
A billowing quilt upon the soft Spring breeze,
And April smiles on primroses and weeps
On hearts made young again with loving these.

And you, my little child, I watch your eyes
Light up with childhood wonder, questioning;

You that have known gunfire for lullabies,
You could not dream the happiness of Spring.
From you I learn how great this miracle
And all my heart cries out that you may see
Each year's awakening through childhood's sight,
With this acceptance and simplicity.

SUMMER

The full-limbed Summer rises, rich the earth,
Deep-throated Summer's voice and vibrant, low,
At night she loves ; night, and she treads the fields
Distils her heady scent, and leaves a glow
Of passion in her wake. The moon full sail
Upon a sea of stars, and from the woods
A brighter star shoots up, the nightingale
That sings of love, and then a silence broods
Over the mellow darkness. Ah ! the pain
Of so much beauty, beauty near to tears.
For Summer must grow old and so soon die.
My heart, remembering this, is dark with fears,
For now the promise of the Spring is done
As childhood grows into maturity,
The fruit secure ; and sadly has begun
The slow disintegration of the tree.

And you, my child, for whom the year is new,
Live these sweet hours with gladness, keep your trust
In mortal things and lovely that they stay
Fresh in your heart when all else turns to dust.
And may you be so much alive that through
Your unveiled eyes shines the essential you.

AUTUMN

The Autumn reminds me of torches, of flames
That light back the year, the laughter,
Swift movement and slow deep dawns, and names
That have gone out, not to be lit again after
The sun has gone. Autumn reminds me of all
The things we have cherished and lost, that fall
Behind in the ranks of the days, the deep
Ranks like the waves of the ocean, that sweep
Endlessly back and beyond. Autumn, too swift
For my hungry eyes, for a moment will lift
The soft veil of a curtain : sunlight pours through
On the flame of the leaves and above is the blue
Of a sky that I lay beneath once, loving the touch
Of its amber warmth. Autumn brings back so much
That my heart is on fire with longing, yet I stare
At a ghost leaf, net-frail, that I hold in the empty air.
For Spring and Summer have gone, the lovely year

That grew so sweetly and so surely full
Is snared and gathered up, is lying here
Sinking to earth, as if damp fingers pull
It, half-resisting. Slowly it fades from green
To grey. Yet if it had not been
And if my heart had never stirred to know
The swift incredible, the breathless Spring
With breaking blossom, scents and sounds that flow
About a Summer night, and birds that fling
Exquisite notes, like petals to the sky,
Then this I surely could not know: to die
Is just a dream, a final way to see
The fragile fabric of mortality . .
Oh! flames, like torches, falling, falling fast,
Signal I come, signal back to the past
And forward to the unknown dawns, the truth,
Signal with these diminished flames of youth!
Signal while time burns out in love and tears:
Life is not in the rhythmic tedious years
But in one moment that is so sublime
The spark it lights outglows the rest of time.

But I grow old, my child, and cease to look
Into the future, while with outstretched hands
You turn towards the Summer of your days,
Days of full flowering over sun-warmed lands.
And love is yours to crown the joy of living
And yours are gifts of bounteous Summer's giving.
Gather this joy and colour and this laughter
Light every moment that it brightly burn
In the warm fires that you shall sit by, after
This hour is done, for it shall not return
Save in the Autumn when the full heart reaps
The last warm golden sheaves, before it sleeps.

WINTER

The sound of winds comes crying through the night
And aching blackness, and a wisp of moon
Struggles to tear apart the ragged clouds.
The sullen morning, late, the shortened noon,
And the long dull dreary night without a gleam
From cottage window. Only a bomber throbbing
And the heart-aching sound of a child sobbing.
There is no meaning in this dying,
This wasting of the year, or has decay
A wisdom that for all man's trying
Is undecipherable? Has this stark
Grim beauty of the tree a truth to lend
As it lent its limbs for the Spring to clothe?
Is Death only waiting at the end?

The snow falls thickly on the earth that knew
The waking Spring and Summer's living breath,
The fire of Autumn, then the fire's first ash.
And yet for earth this dying is not death.
But a time quiescent, a sleeping and a dream,
A time not of remembering nor hoping;
Somewhere beneath the soil the seed still lives
And in this muffled darkness it is groping
Towards the light. The secret somewhere lies
Not in the flow of days, the year that fades,
Not in the body that grows old and dies,
But in the throbbing vibrant pulse of life,
In the renewing, the ceaselessness of birth,
In the undying seed beneath the earth.

So I, my child, shall die, and you grow old;
Had I not lived, your children would not know
The wonder of the Spring, and part of me
Shall see what you shall see, go where you go,
And we that died shall meet across the years
And in your loving, love, weep with your tears.
For the unborn and the dead are one,
Part of the seed beneath the ageless sun.

DOROTHY GIBSON.

KEEN

WEARILY ends another day
Grey darkness lies outspread.
But time and space ended for me
When they told me you were dead.

Ours was a story just begun.
With civilised repose
We turned the pages one by one
Not dreaming of its close.

Eager to meet and loath to part,
Yet forcing not the pace,
Each anxious that the other's heart
Find a sure resting place.

Death like a tiger suddenly
Struck and passed on his way.
But you are more alive to me
Than any man to-day.

How surface-near the truth welled through
That never will be said.
I left you manhood's right to woo.
How may one woo the dead?

O painful love not young, not old,
Than youth more strong and shy!

We trusted time, but time had sold
Us to eternity.

I search insipid crowds in spate.
Where has your selfhood flown ?
How now shall I communicate
The things we did not own ?

And do you know you took my mind
In death's captivity ?
Who are more virile, potent, kind,
Than any man to me.

Eyes, island-blue, flash quiet glee,
Brown hair holds thick star-shine.
His conqueror's charm interred in me,
I am a hero's shrine.

Time writhes, though it has ceased to move.
The clock is striking five.
But I love you better, dead, my Love,
Than any man alive.

A. G. Piggot.

"CALLED UP"

AND one shall die, who else had lived
Through good, long years to see
The children of his children climb,
Loving, upon his knee ;
But only ghosts of these shall pass
Before a girl's eyes, wet
With barren tears : shall pass and fade
Till she, please God, forget.

And one who loves the coloured world,
The flow and forms of light,
Shall find no canvases within
The prison of his night.
And one, great-minded now, his friends
Shall deem him better dead :
A witless cumber on the care
Of those he would have led.

And none shall do as he'd have done
Had Hell not gaped so nigh :
Buds of unnumbered Might-Have-Beens,
Withered unopened, lie
Thick on the roads where they must march,
Whom Strength and Youth condemn
To save a future that shall be
Darkened by loss of them.

Gilbert Chadwick.

OUT OF THE STARRY MAZE

OUT of the starry maze two beings came,
Two figures pallid as zodiacal light,
Their eyes like heads of comets; clear as flame
Their bodies, and their limbs of Alpine height.
Deep in the dark of some galactic cloud,
Upon a little globe they paused unseen,
And viewed its landscapes—brown and white and green—
A flowering planet, fruitfully endowed;
And asked, "This watery world in barren space—
What if its hills have nursed a reasoning race?"
And sadly one replied, "Alas, no trace
Of any conscious creature!" For their eyes
That often had stared into the furnace suns,
Were blind to things of protozoan size,
Blind to the earth's minute two-footed ones . . .
Until, not losing hope,
Finally they equipped a microscope,
And through its mile-wide glass
Beheld wee stick-like millions swarm and pass.
And how they winked in merriment to see
These weird wild-rushing animaculae!
Leaping and whirling round,
Great myriads twisted in a blackened spot,
And hosts were burned or drowned,
And hosts were mashed into a crimson blot,
And buzzing pygmy raiders streaked in air,
And shells began to flare,
And all their midget works, in the puff and glare,
Dwindled and vanished.
"Of what use are they
To the great universe?" one traveller said;
And flicked his heel. "I'll stamp into the clay,
And crush these insects—they were better dead!" . . .
"Doubtless. Yet all subserves some wiser goal,
Even life so small and frail and fugitive,"
The other answered. "Though they have no soul,
All things are parcel of the mighty Whole,
Down to the basest atom. Let them live!"
So murmuring, he spread his wings once more,
A million times a million leagues to soar
To Hercules, or Ursa Major's shore
Of fire and glory . . . . As he leapt away,
One of his pinions brushed the land below;
And men reported hurricanes that day,
And kingdoms began to sway
With earthquake shock and thunder . . . . Still unchecked,
The little creatures lashed with many a blow,
And hacked, and tore, and slew . . . and wrecked,
and wrecked, and wrecked.

STANTON A. COBLENTZ.

THE BALLAD OF THE *EGLANTINE*

THE freighter *Eglantine* wasn't owned by any line,
And 'er engines and 'er gear were shocking old,
So the north Atlantic swell didn't suit 'er temper well
When she carried wheat or weapons in 'er hold.
She was grimy, she was patched, and 'er cabin paint was scratched,
But we kept the bright illusions of our pride.
Dockside rowdies pointed to 'er, but she seemed to us who knew 'er
The match o' any liner from the Clyde.
We had Jimmy, short and stocky, who declared 'e'd been a jockey ;
We had Tom, who once took tickets in the trams,
And, according to the Mate, we was none of us first-rate,
'E'd seen smarter sailor johnnies shoved in prams.
We was classed as 'umble rankers by the big ships and the tankers,
And the Convoy made an 'andsome sight in view
When the sunlit waves were tossing and we started on the crossing
But we met with dirty weather, and it blew !
Then the Old Man took and nursed 'er, and the other Captains cursed 'er,
And they flung the rude remarks of sailor men,
They yelled, "Mister, take my tip, leave that 'eadache of a ship,
For she ain't been scraped for barnacles since when !"
Through the thankless winter weather, we chaps worked and 'ung together ;
The pains of mortal flesh were ours to bear.
Yet we grinned and went on joking, bent our backs and went on stoking ;
We grew used to sodden bunks and rough, hard fare.
Storms and blizzards rose and 'owled, and them horrid U-boats prowled,
And we saw the ship ahead a burning wreck !
We could watch the big guns flashing, hear the rumble and the crashing,
Feel the wind of 'eavy shells along the deck.
Then the Mate, 'e shook 'is 'ead, and spoke grimly when 'e said,
"This is more than U-boat tactics, seems to me !
There's a surface vessel round ; we'll discover, I'll be bound
She's their battleship, the *Edelweiss,* at sea !"
There was smoke and much confusion, we was under no delusion,
And we knew that things were bad and getting worse.
For it kind of set you thinking when you saw them big ships sinking.
Came the order through to scatter and disperse.
Then the Captain spoke, "Now, boys, don't you 'eed the blooming noise,
For we haven't got the speed to get away.
But with seamanship and guile, we can puzzle Fritz awhile,
We can keep this pop-eyed Prussian 'ere in play !"
So we dodged, and used in turn, every trick a chap can learn ;
Our steering was eccentric, wild and strange,
But we drew the Jerry's fire, which fulfilled our main desire,
And we watched the Convoy slipping out of range.
We was rocked by deep vibrations, dazed by monster detonations,
And our startled dead lay grinning where they dropped.
'Eavy jets of spray were flung where our stove-in lifeboats hung,
And across our stokhold floor foul water slopped.
As the *Edelweiss* loomed nearer, we could trace 'er gross bulk clearer,

We could see 'er ugly outline fairly well,
And we kind of held our breath on the purple edge of death.
She was closing in to blow us all to hell!
You'd 'ave known by just a glance that we didn't stand a chance.
But the sombre clouds 'ad gathered through the day,
And the good Lord stood beside us for His snow came down to 'ide us
With a veil of ever-falling, feather grey!
So we knew our lives were spared, and Maclean, our Chief, declared,
"If ye fancied this a time to tak' yer ease,
Ye can pack yon fancy dream up, dinna argue, get the steam up!
We've our way to mak' across the cauld grey seas!"
Half the bridge was charred and battered, and the galley had been shattered,
And the instruments were damaged past repair.
But the Mate, 'e joked and said, "When the blinking east is red,
We can reckon England somewhere over there!"
So a-pitching and a-rocking with our broken gear a-knocking,
With our blood-stained decks a-slobber with the foam,
And with worn down engines sighing, and 'er draggled Ensign flying,
We brought the proud old freighter lurching home.
So to-day she lies in port with the dock cranes paying court,
And a-fumbling in 'er innards for the load.
And the Old Man mutters gruffly, "Boys, I've scanned the 'eadlines roughly,
Folk believe we're blushing 'eroes, well I'm blowed!"
Now we don't approve such capers, nor our pictures in the papers,
Nor we haven't any fancy yarns to tell.
We ain't used to so much fuss made of common chaps like us;
Strangers 'alt and shake our 'ands and wish us well.
So we'll add just one word more to our views on total war:
The sea is still the 'ighway of the rover,
Where the gulls cry out in sorrow. So we're off, perhaps to-morrow,
And we'll bring the breakfast bacon *next trip-over!*

GRETA BRIGGS.

RESURRECTION

I

BEARING a torch
I come.
Behold! the darkness breaks.
I am Freedom,
And my voice awakes
Triumphant echoes in man's soul,
And in the answering skies.

You who cower in the holes of the earth,
You with piteous eyes;
You whom men have willed to die,
I hear your cries.
You who fall in the streets of famine,
You behind iron bars,
You in the room of torture,
My voice has reached the stars!
My feet are set in the martyred city,
Where women weep and pray;
In the ruined square
Where the fountain splashed,
And the children used to play.
My breath blows through the desolate streets,
And from the dust there springs a flower,
Like hope, the hope which sees again
The upright wall,
The lofty tower.
I breathe beside the broken door,
And by the cold hearths of the poor,

Re-kindling dreams
Which cannot die.
I bring before the faded eye
A vision of all things made new—
All things destroyed by hate, built up
By love—
O you . . . and you . . .
Who sit within the lonely room,
Lift up your hearts!
Beyond the gloom,
And beyond the reach of death
Hover those banished things
Whereby men live,
And draw sweet breath—
Love, peace and joy,
Beauty and holiness.
They shall return
On dove-like wings
Into the heart,
Which is their home.
They shall return—
O you . . . and you . . .
Cast out your fear,
Set wide the gate,
Noiseless as angels
They will pass through.

II

And you who love the Spring,
Yet will not hear
The blackbird's song,
Nor gather flowers this year
Beyond the city.
You that are bound too fast
To wheels that turn
Without pause or pity;
In whose ear
Thunders the monstrous voice
Of the machine—
I say to you:
Sun and moon and stars
Are in the sky,
And underneath the budding trees
The grass is green.
You have not forgotten
The peace of evening-time,
The lovely light
In field and lane,
The full-blown apple-blossom,
Or the gentle bird
Which spreads her wings
Above her young—
Think on these things.
For when the hideous tools of death
Have done their worst,
There will be sunlight still,
And singing birds.
See, on your granite walls
My torch, uplifted, flings
The light of promised Springs.
Hate shall not triumph,
Nor shall men hold fast
To evil gods—
The sword will break at last,
And over all the earth
Man's risen soul proclaim
Death vanquished,
Winter past.

III

And you in the shadows,
Left to die,
I hear your cry.
Under stark
And blackened boughs
Where no birds sing,
I come to where you lie,
And look on running wound
And shattered limb,
And on your eyes'
Dumb questioning.

. . . . . .

What answer, like a living flame,
Shall wreathe this fallen head?
What answer glorify
These wounds so red?
What answer, at the final breath,
Shake all the heavens with light—
What answer, Death?

. . . . . .

There is One
Who rolled away a stone
And in the morning walked
Among the lilies;
There is One
Who rose up from the dead
With all the glory of the Spring
About His head;
There is One
Standing in the rising sun

Who saith :
I am the resurrection,
And the life . . . .
O earth, O heavens,
Rejoice !
After mortal strife,
After man's last breath
His soul, uplifted, cries :
There is no death !

IV

And you, O woman,
Who stand at the open door,
Watching the road
Your sons went down
To the smoking hills,
And the red plains
Of war.
Woman in whom the slumbrous fires
Of wisdom burn,
Do you watch
For their return ?
Lifting your eyes to the hills,
Do you watch for a sign ?
Do you wait to see, at last,
Their eager faces shine
Through the white dawn,
After the night is past ?

Woman, they shall return to you
After their peace is won ;
They shall sow the barren fields again
With their faces to the sun ;
They shall sit down with you
After their work is done.
But at the hearth where love abides
Your vigil must not cease—
Woman, your faith must be the rock
Beneath their hard-won peace.

V

Now, having drained
The bitter cup,
Man lifts his fettered hands
Towards the dawn—
He lifts them up,
Knowing that faith shall triumph,
And the night be past ;
Knowing that when the morning breaks
He will stand free
At last.

See, in his hollow eyes,
Out of great depths of pain,
New stars of hope arise,
And the faint radiance
Of the coming dawn
Touches his brow.
Slowly sorrow dies,
And from his shoulders
His great burden lifts,
Like a cloud,
And melts into the skies . . . .

O birds, wheel round him
With your joyous cries ;
O earth, spread all your blossoms
At his feet ;
O grass, spring up,
O wind and rain,
Cleanse his scarred body
From all stain ;
O light, sweep down
From hills of peace
Into his heart,
That fear may cease ;
O sun, unsheathe
Your golden sword
And smite his chains
—O risen Lord,
Whose living touch
Makes all things whole,
Enter his soul.

Frances Heneage Burkitt.

THE WIND

FROM the Siberian Steppes,
Laden with cold,
Bowed and broken with bitter cold,
The wind came.
I watched it approach,
Whimpering round the skirt of the sky,
Bickering with every cringing leaf
And sprawling clumsily through the grass.

From regions of utter bleakness,
The wind came,
Frightened at its own misery,
Snarling in empty defiance,
Poor, wild, impotent wind.
I slipped along the ground and leapt
And digging my fingers in that desolate hair
I screamed it onwards.
Oh—the black, black anger, the horrible fury
Of this sulky, bucking wind!
How I laughed!
The wind I made my chariot,
Onward we howled through the craven spaces,
Onward we shrieked through the cowering world.
Oh the wind—poor, raging, bewildered wind—
I broke its heart,
I crushed that frozen heart
Until it burst and gushed with passion.

We were terrible with beauty born of power
As we raped the quivering earth,
As we ravaged the mute air.
And I leaned and thonged the rain by her heels
And dragged her weeping in our wake;
Leashed the lightening
And with one hand plucked the protesting thunder
That reverberated in agony and the stars were tears.

Through those maddened skies we sped,
Singing our song of storm.
We dredged the clouds before us
And behind us we strewed brightness,
And in the blue void of our passage
Our satellites came clothed in a raiment of terror.

Oh the wind and I were mighty!
We drank the fierce wine of exultation,
Hugely we drank and well
For the dregs of tumult were sweet in our mouths
And glad was the taste of triumph.

JENNIFER R. CLARK.

THE PETRARCHAN SONNET COMPETITION

REPORT AND AWARD

OVER five hundred sonnets (and a few unorthodox pieces, which the writers optimistically classed as Petrarchan) were submitted. They came from far-away parts of the world, New Zealand, Bolivia, U.S.A., South Africa, Sicily, as well as from every part of the British Isles. Competitors of sixteen (and one of fourteen) performed creditably in every case. One entry was written in Italian.

The experience of reading the sonnets was somewhat analagous to one's first examination of Keats' "Endymion," except that the seven thousand lines divided into those symmetrical fourteen-line poems would contain Keats' longest poem almost twice. As in "Endymion," lines and passages of quite arresting beauty were met among a somewhat bewildering network of incompletely-realised thought in too great finery of expression or the inadequate expression (too hurriedly set down) of a good thought.

Originality combined with sensitiveness was found in approximately one-third of the entries, and then some fault, trifling in the writer's eyes, perhaps, as he or she composed, but serious in a sonnet, marred too many of them from the point of view both of poetry and this competition. But to turn to the entries which from the beginning stood little chance. These lacked that infusion of a magical "something," that undefinable alchemy which, when a thought is expressed in verse, spells poetry. A good dish—a good wine—a good poem—in their differing degrees coincide in this : the flavour is subtle and memorable. Without this flavour all the effort of creation is in vain. And that is what happened in these cases ; the entries often gave the impression of intense effort, but where was the achievement of the art which alone can transmute obstinate words into winged messengers ?

Sometimes an otherwise good sonnet crashed on a phrase, *e.g.*, one well constructed and worded entry ended with the phrase, "the pink of perspicacity."

It is a safe rule in verse-writing to let the words run in as direct a style as possible, as in prose. Inversion then occurs occasionally, inevitably, and with proper effect. A tendency towards over-inversion is bound up with another—that of straining to be "poetical." Phrases (occurring in some of these sonnets) like "golden dreams of splendour," "I tremble not," "deep hidden 'neath," "scorn enow," gladdened the reader less than the simpler diction of others, which changed when the phrase suddenly flashed on to the paper with the effect of a minor revelation. One sonnet risked and achieved overstatement by using for three of its rhyming words, "ecstasy," "majesty" and "purity." Overstatement is surely as undesirable as its opposite.

Most of the sonnets conformed to the rules, though some disregarded them. One competitor suggested that his sestet, *cdeedc*, might provide more variety than the rhymes stipulated in the rules of the competition. Another let the cart run away with the horse and gave the sestet before the octave. Small slips in spelling and punctuation were to be found, especially as regards the possessive "its." Often a full stop or a question mark should have replaced the blank space which greeted the expectant eye.

In the sonnet, all is *not* fair in love or war, but a considerable number of those (and they were many) who wrote on these themes, sometimes conjoining them, had other ideas, and an Alexandrine, placed at the end for emphasis, or a line limping along with two feet missing, caused "finis" to be written across the chances of such an entry as far as the competition is concerned.

How regrettable that the little extra care was not taken more often. Two sonnets which could not go forward because of (entirely unnecessary) defects, had in them fine lines, *e.g.* :

So, with our Shelley, we may get and hold
The faery fabrics and the fragrances . . . . .

(ruined by the next line, "To present—to Whom?" From which the way to What?"), and from a sonnet called "The Face of Sleep":

Sleep on, oh lovely face, in sleepless stone
Dreaming with carved, moonlustred, marble grace
While as the leaves, moonlit acacia, trace
Their wav'ring shadows, on the breeze is blown
Around the temple in shrill monotone
Sweet, haunted sound, half from the cicadas . . . . .

(In this second passage, incidentally, why "wav'ring," when "wavering" is the word? And why the accent on moonlustred?) After the word "cicadas" we have "Half Pan, half syren song," making *three* halves.

The best half-hundred sonnets were of finer stuff, not, indeed, faultless, but nearly all of them remarkable for both force and delicacy of phrase; and if greater results were not achieved, it is well to remember how very small has been the output of perfect sonnets even among the great English poets. Leaving out Shakespeare, who never wrote a Petrarchan sonnet, I very much doubt if a hundred great sonnets have been written in the English language. Wordsworth wrote about one hundred and sixty sonnets. Five or six of them are superb, though one of the best, "Scorn not the Sonnet," is marred by a rhymed couplet at the end of the sestet, which (in my view at any rate) is quite wrong in a Petrarchan sonnet. There are perhaps half-a-dozen more of his which are good sonnets without being masterpieces, and the rest range from mediocre to bad. Keats is continually being praised as a great sonneteer, but how many really great sonnets did he write? He wrote the one magnificent sonnet (on Chapman's Homer), but the rest do not. I venture to say, amount to very much. So why should one expect that out of five hundred contemporary examples there would be a higher average than that reached by these two great poets?

At any rate, as I have been asked to judge this competition, I can only give my true opinion, which is that I have found only one sonnet among the five hundred entries which I consider to be quite first rate: "Escape" by Mr. W. Luck, and to him I award the prize.

I have added six more as "runners-up," the best of which I take to be "The Deathless Measure" by Mr. Arnold Vincent Bowen. The remaining five are "Sacrifice" by Mr. Harrison Smith (Pte., Pioneers), an untitled "Sonnet" by Mr. Clive Sansom, "The New Inquisition" by Mrs. Marguerite Johansen Deane, "Sonnet for the flyleaf of a book of love poems" by Lieut.-Colonel R. E. H. Elwes, O.B.E., and "Digging For Peace" by Mr. Thomas Demarden Williams. The last five I have placed in order of merit.

August, 1944. ALFRED DOUGLAS.

ESCAPE

TO seize the immortal Quality of Best,
That like a tide within us, ebbs and flows,
And ebbs again, and never wholly goes
Beyond our reach, but never is at rest,
A man is maddened, as he were possessed
Devoured with leaping need that stronger grows
To pass the bounds his fellows would impose,
The caging of the world, that on him pressed.

This oystered pearl, this prince in rags, this ring
Bedaubed with mire, this death-surviving troll,
This hungry wail that takes no quieting,
If a man keep it not in hard control,
Madness they call it. At his burying
Do they not understand ? It was his soul.

West Malling, Kent. W. Luck.

THE DEATHLESS MEASURE

SLIGHT not, my songs, the singing centuries,
But with the old, fair measures waken still
Infinite music inexhaustible
That holds so well with how much lovelier ease
Than these new-mannered modes that trick and tease
An ear entranced by the authentic thrill
Awaked by echo on the enchanted hill
Where sings the muse her deathless sentences.

Nor be dismayed amid this noise and force
Whence no fine voices on the breeze may steal
To quell the furies, grappling tooth and nail.
Beauty hath still invincible resource :
Though Winter stride above with iron heel
The crocus sleeps, yet knows she will prevail.

Birkenhead. Arnold Vincent Bowen.

SONNET

WHEN we have heard Death's traffic in the air,
And seen through our imagination's eye
Those Troy-doomed cities, where his legions fly,
Blasted to ruin : gnarled, grotesque and bare
As Death himself—"There is no room for prayer,
None for belief or certainty," we cry.
"Where is that vision can wipe clean the sky,
And what our final fortress from despair ?"
"Look to the wakened world," the earth replies.
"The seed, that dares the evils Winter brings,
Is buried, numbed with death, yet never dies,
Emblem of all oppressed, unyielding things,
Proclaiming that within man's spirit lies
The pain, the triumph of a thousand Springs.

Reigate. Clive Sansom.

SACRIFICE

THESE boys are grown-up men. No more for them
Will childhood's laughter lend its old-time lilt.
If out of blood and sweat it may be built
These toil to build the new Jerusalem.
With mourning motherhood our hearts condemn
Their lamb-like sacrifice for others' guilt.

Daily with jokeless death they jest and tilt.
To-day kill or be killed is wisdom's gem.

Someday there'll come a peaceful afternoon.
That hallowed one in seven let us choose,
And somewhere in God's country may we be.
Though shines the sun more genially and the tune
Of birds ring sweeter—We will never lose
That sense of Christ still hanging on each tree.

Pte., Pioneers. HARRISON SMITH.

THE NEW INQUISITION

THEY burned the body to redeem the soul
In those old days, those dark old days of yore.
We have grown wiser now, so much the more
Destruction-wise—we seek to blast the whole.
Science has killed Man's God ; the thunder-roll
Of diving death sweeps home and hearth before ;
Yet, should he stay to wash one festering sore,
See where the Vulture hovers—State Control !

O Liberty, what freedom can they give
Who freedom market, planned to the last rod,
Prefabricated hatching-house for fools !
Is this their prize who warred with Death to *live*,
Who in that Hell-blast looked again for God—
Shall we build Paradise with tainted tools ?

Swindon. MARGUERITE JOHANSEN DEANE.

DIGGING FOR PEACE, THE ONLY VICTORY

DEPRESSED by war and jaded with its toil,
I choose my sanctuary in a spot
Hallowed by Spring's renewal. In my plot
I touch the Earth and sift the healing soil,

Find peace in pruning, strength in buds that foil
May's lurking frosts. All else is here forgot :
The cares and canker of the world can not
Creep into my enclosure, but recoil

Baulked by the pigeon and the tyrant weed,
My jealous bodyguard. The bee, my friend,
Seals every blossom, makes the harvest sure,

And on each beanstalk sounds his muted reed
As though the rhythmic task had but one end,
To help me with my gardening and my cure.

Highgate West Hill, N.6. THOMAS DEMARDEN WILLIAMS.

FOR THE FLYLEAF OF A BOOK OF LOVE POEMS

I, BEING dumb, send you, my messengers,
To speak my longing for me, to discharge
The breath of my desire and to enlarge
The heart of pity that is surely hers.
Through you my sighs will be her followers,
As, to the watcher by the river marge,
The love-sick winds of Cleopatra's barge
Followed upon the Queen of all despairs.
Go to her then, my Bearers of the Rose,
Speak at her ear the secret of no name,
Which love must yet believe but never knows,
Which is for ever new but still the same,
That she to whom your Writ of Entry goes
May rise for me to vest herself in flame!

Kensington, W. RICHARD ELWES.

* * * * *

THE LONELY SAMIAN

The heartache of the Greek sailor in exile

AND Yanni mourned, I've nothing now
Save tears, for company.
In Famine's grip my People bow,
A far land fosters me,
Half land, half sea.

Ah, Samos, loveliest isle of Greece!
I fled your groves, my fair,
And Northward came, where twilit peace
Rules a stark world, and bare.
So chill the air.

Strange refuge, in near-darkness, hewn
Out of Earth's coaly bed,
No sun-drenched plains, all poppy-strewn,
Caress my grateful head.
This land is dead.

Soft move the people, silent race,
And silent watch they keep.
Long since I left the fruitful place
Where mirth and song are cheap.
Lonely I sleep.

Clothed in cold solitude, I dream
Of skies where sunfires burn,
Of mountain pool and tinkling stream
Close-girt by rush and fern.
Lord,
Speed my return.

Greek Merchant Navy. W. R. LOADER.

MY WORD!

POWERS great as ever yet
Moved in man in me have met,
A new World-Order to beget

Systems I would uncreate
At my touch disintegrate ;
My lightest word is charged with fate.

Earth, where'er my feet have trod
Trembles. Like the wrath of God
Falls my renovating rod.

Cowering nations weep their dead,
And shower their curses on my head.
Let them hate me, while they dread !

A burning, unrelenting hate
On the Jew I concentrate,
Who dared our blood contaminate.

Should some meaner star aspire
To mate with mine, and share its fire,
I meet with smiles a vain desire.

Soon it sees, with awed surprise,
Radiance that would flood the skies
Dimmed by the mightier orb's uprise.

From the hearts of Aryan youth
I have expurgated ruth,
And all that blunts the claw and tooth.

Culture I have cast behind,
It tends to emasculate a Mind
For unimpeded power designed.

Religion still may weave her spells,
If, at my call, she rings her bells,
And all I bid her tell she tells.

Science stands if all her skill
Is spent in striving to fulfil
A single dominating will,

Alien breeds, that sue for grace,
Must toil in their appointed place,
Resigned to serve a lordlier race.

If, as tools, they fuhction well,
I may mitigate their Hell,
Or let them in some Limbo dwell.

None but fools my wrath provoke.
All must pass beneath my yoke,
As have passed my Herrenvolk.

Though, from out their shrouded isle,
Wingèd hordes may sting awhile,
They too shall cry Heil Hitler ! Heil !

False seers, who deal in wishful dope,
Have dared foredoom me to the rope.
The heavens deride their horoscope.

Caesar's laurels droop and fade ;
Alexander's ghost is laid ;
Napoleon's part more deftly played.

THOS. THORNELY.

TO THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR

NOVEMBER 11TH

REMOTE you lie, beneath your wreaths of bay,
And by your silence all the hopes defeat
Of those who claim you now. No quickening beat
Of heart can make you answer when we say—
"What of your childhood—where your boyish play,
And which of us has passed you in the street
Or held your hand in greeting—heard your feet
Go by us as you hurried on your way ?"

And in your dreams before you came to die,
Had you no prescience of that wondrous fate—
Loud challenge to a silent Laureate—
Which brought you back in death to occupy
A place unparalleled in history ?
Unknown ! Yet known to all the world too late !

KATE ELLISON.

POETS AND PRETENDERS

"We vault the moon
to storm within a procreative swoon."

seems to describe very adequately the unreality of *Measures for Masses* by John Kincaid, published by the Clyde Group (MacLellan, 1s. 6d.), whose avowed purpose is to offer the public the works of artists whose minds beat with the deep pulse of the people. Our quotation comes from a sonnet which for pretentiousness and flatness would be difficult to beat. It would appear that pulses on the Clyde move with a hardly discernible throb as though life had been too much for them. In another sonnet the author addressing his love asserts "I will not stroke your breasts with metaphors," and so great is the internal stress under which he labours that he suggests no alternative caress.

The world of John Kincaid is a chaos in which beauty has been smothered by discontent.

We will be like the wind,
We masses,
We will be like the leaping wind
Like a tide down the street crevasses
We will pour
On the crest of a roar
As on walls do the torrents of wind.

But he attempts no appeal to those emotions which set men marching upon difficult enterprises. His missionary fervour is of the woe! woe! kind, full of groans for lost delights and an introspective despondency which depresses at a time when an additional dose of violence, if only verbal, is a work of supererogation. There is no contact with reality either in the outcrop, or should it be "opencast," deposit of sex which in his collapsing world is still, though surprisingly, a touchstone, a mainspring and an everlasting obsession.

The pulse of the people does not beat to any such measure. It is true that mankind seems to be in some danger of a moral retrogression under the impact of novel and unlimited violence, but we believe the cure to lie in a totally different direction from that which Mr. Kincaid has taken. Experimentation is all very well and it may be true, as the foreword asserts, that men will have to be experimental in living, but surely it would be better, if justice and light is the goal of our experimentation, that poets should emerge from their egotistical crysalis and spread some winged beauty in the sun. The attempt to appeal to the average man with this kind of dim introspection must surely fail in an age when that much misused individual is a-hunger for the re-assurance which beauty alone can give him.

A very different book is *The Great Treason* by P. E. Leaver (W. H. Allen, 2s. 6d.). Here is no violence but, in the long poem which gives the book its name, a sort of objective and highly literary disquisition in which the youth of the warring nations address their rulers. Mr. Leaver's command of language invites our comment, since it is in danger of usurping too much of both our attention and his. This is to concentrate upon the mechanics of poetry what should be directed to its fundamental emotional quality. The main poem and the others which complete the collection all have this rather conscious literary flavour as though everything was carefully, even delicately, composed with a mind cool and unmoved by any depth of feeling. Poetry of this sort may surprise by originality of expression, but never by originality of thought, may even move one's admiration though entirely lacking in emotional conviction. There is also a tendency towards modern forms (or formlessness) and rhythms. Mr. Leaver's handling of these, however, is seldom such as to achieve poetry. He is

better in his more traditional rhymed pieces where he finds upon occasion a good image and a more apparently spontaneous note.

To include *Green and Grey,* the collected poems of Lord Vansittart (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.), in an article with such a title as this is hardly appropriate, for the author makes no pretence whatever, not even to be a poet, which is not to say that he does not write poetry. Indeed, while the reader might be tempted to describe the book as a collection of verse, of a singularly vigorous and distinguished character, he will frequently be warmed and excited by the subtle and spontaneous presence of that quality which, for want of a more definite term, we call poetry. The point is its spontaneity, its unself-conscious arrival as part of the normal expression of a man of affairs who is not introspectively concerned to interpret himself to our possibly uninterested ears, but who succeeds admirably in compelling our interest in scenes and themes which have interested him to the point of self-forgetful inspiration. The volume is a testimony to a wide diversity of interests and we understand that both youth and experience have contributed to the collection. There is, therefore, something indeed much, for all unvitiated palates which can appreciate the fruits of a lively and vigorous intellect.

This diversity of mood and theme is, of course, natural in those whose lives have been spent in active participation in the affairs of the world and whose writing, therefore, is the spare-time expression of strong impressions and emotions. It is inevitable in such circumstances that there should be a quality of unforced sincerity and a simplicity very far removed from so much that is published to-day. The gulf between vigour and intensity has never been better illustrated than by this collection of poems wherein vitality is implicit in every line and one looks in vain for the studied obscurity of illusory depth whereby the pretenders seek to hide a dearth of experience and a poverty of genuine emotion.

This matter of experience, conferring as it does maturity of comprehension, is of the first importance to the poet and for most can only be obtained by the application of a good mind, over many years of ordinary living, to the problems and meanings of life. Those exceptional beings who are born with the silver spoon of knowledge in their mouths are no refutation of the value of maturity for the common run of men; and our frequent immersions in the flood of verse, neo-poetry and poetry have convinced us that the successful man of the world is more apt to produce acceptable poetry than the youthful scribbler with a gift for words, a large bump of irreverence and an astonishing self-confidence. We are, therefore, glad and grateful when, as to-day, more than one distinguished man presents us with the work of his pen. Mr. G. Rostrevor Hamilton is, of course, well-known for the strong and confident note of his poetry and in *Death in April* (Cambridge University Press, 3s. 6d.) he delights us again with his mastery. The author is neither afraid nor weary of beautiful things and for him a lyric should sing with a sustained, unquivering voice that rings with a sure sense of the acceptability of simple things—"The Ivy" exemplifies this. An old coach-house, ivy-covered, has been pulled down and the poem paints the woes of the various denizens of that thick green cover forced to seek new homes. Here he commiserates the owl:

> There has the barn-owl lost his perch
> Where he, profaning with no hoot
> The hush as of an empty church,
> Would, like an angler taking root
> Beside a willowy river-brink,
> A feathered statue, watch, nor wink;

No need of line or bait to throw—
Into the stream of night would pierce
Those orbs with golden flame aglow ;
No need of hook—those talons fierce,
Like lighning with no thunder heard,
Would strike on rustle of mouse or bird.

Mr. Hamilton is concerned greatly with nature and its beauties and is conscious that for all our sophistication we are all subject, in greater or less degree, to the spells and enchantments of the world we inhabit. These he brings to us like a friend pointing out a lovely vista or a leaping fish and with him as a companion our pleasure is doubled and deepened by a sharper awareness of beauty than could be vouchsafed to a solitary observer.

Lovers of poetry will be gladdened by the new volume *Endymion To Silver* by T. W. Ramsey (English Universities Press, 6s.), for, as one would expect from the author of *Antares* and *Four Witch-Balls,* here is a luminous mixture of tradition and modernism which refuses any but its own individual classification. A poet so unselfconscious must find his own means of expression, undisturbed and uninfluenced by rival schools, and none can or have claimed his adherence.

But what is this distinctive quality ? It is, of course, nothing but the flowering of a sub-conscious selection of what is good in all kinds of poetry. T. W. Ramsey is not in revolt nor is he fanatically resolved to die in the last ditch for the *Ancien Regime*. He sits upon a sub-conscious fence, from which humble eminence he hearkens for music, searches for beauty, and applies them with that allusiveness which is also elusive and which is the better part of modernism. There is no brusquerie, no brutality, and above all, nothing of that desire to be impudent to the reader in the hope of attracting attention which distinguishes so much modern verse. The author is not conscious of the reader at all and in his use of words aspires to no literary distinction, or to that unusualness of diction which prevents one seeing the wood for the trees. His diction is always simple, eschewing the desire to impress in favour of a more lasting achievement—that of creating something audibly and intellectually memorable for the discriminating ear and the thoughtful mind.

This music folded in the ear of the thinker
These chords are beauty unsounded by mind,
Deep foundations of the architecture
Of truth in form in music in words,

expresses well enough Mr. Ramsey's bent of mind, his technique in the search for beauty. His essential lack of egotism is, in this search, his greatest asset. Indeed, we question whether life viewed through egotistical spectacles can show either much truth or much beauty, and surely the first necessity for any poet is that subjective selflessness which alone can clear the sight and illuminate the mind. We cannot resist quoting from a poem called "1941," which illustrates his simplicity, both of mind and word, excellently :

Once I hoped
A word might survive
Of me when I
Should cease to live.

Now I am older
Well I know
That is not very
Likely to be so.

That what from tide
Of war floats free
Will be very little
Of mine or me.

So be it then
If Power ordained,
Never yet pen
To scribe complained,

But as was bidden — The screed and knew not
Set down clear — Hope nor fear.

The next volume was one of those compilations which are not difficult to classify, but considerably more difficult to account for. The classification is "modern" and as is too often the case with this type of work, there is apparent no bardic aspiration for music, nor any philosophic anxiety to explain the problems of life in pellucid terms. On the contrary, Mr. Drummond Allison in *The Yellow Night* (Fortune Press, 6s.) stoops to make nothing clear and as for music he leaves that to a less advanced generation. Yet much, indeed nearly all, of his work bears the mark of a vigorous and lively mind, and if he is lacking in the temperament, the ear and other essential qualities of the poet, he is not abashed thereby and certainly not mute.

Many of the author's pieces defeat the reviewer entirely. He may say of them that he does not understand and that they have no audible rhythm, but beyond that arid comment he is unable to expand. He may, of course, quote, leaving the problem to the more perceptive reader and we will adopt that plan :

Hearing how Galahad has gathered the Grail
And gone ;
Much marred our mail
And its much challenging scales from wandering wan ;

We take leave to doubt, however, whether even he will be able to comment intelligently upon the unintelligible, and to try may easily reduce him to "wandering wan" himself.

There are, however, poems in the book which are couched in words of more normal coherence. We were struck by a poem entitled "Come let us Pity Death." It is asserted of death (personified) that "He cannot stay to tea or share our sherry," but that "He makes the old man vomit on the carpet." We nearly did too ; and while some may admire this pleasant modern personification of death, pictured by the Ancients as an old man with a scythe or an hour glass or both, but with a macabre dignity of his own, we see in it nothing more than another sample of pointless vulgarity.

These examples are not, maybe, as exactly characteristic of the whole as a commercial sample is supposed to be, but the mental attitude which produced them is recognisable elsewhere sufficiently often to make their notice just. There is generally that avoidance of delicacy and clarity which does not seem and, of course, is not natural, but arises, we believe, from an imperfect or perverted idea of the poetic art and what is proper thereto. This, so distinctive, charm of the modern school would seem to have won the whole-hearted allegiance of Mr. Allison, but yet we hesitate before so prompt a conclusion, for on Page 39 we found the following :

Auden the kestrel and Day Lewis the heron clutter
Up the tiny sky with their vain-glorious wingbeats,
The brindled whelp is slinking down that re-entrant
And somewhere Tommy Brock is in bed with his boots on.

Unconcerned in the least with school or schism is *Not All The Suns* by Nina Cust (Nicholson and Watson, 6s.), and if the music which sings everywhere in this book is a little mellifluous and the sentiment a trifle sweet, there is much to like and this to be said, that Mrs. Cust has not mistaken her role nor wrongly intruded upon a medium reserved for poetic utterance. Upon their own level these poems may be described as good, and if they are rather slight in texture yet the weave is excellent. It may certainly be said that nowhere is there any pretension to an absent profundity nor any enslavement to words for their quality of impact or surprise ; but always and only a concern to use them in their proper metier—to convey meaning as clearly and as

musically as possible. There is a quality of humble faith in such work which makes it at once acceptable as that of one content to tread a beaten path even though conscious that its end is unattainable—of one who does not seek with an antic cleverness and a lack of humility to carve a new road through the thickets of human incoherency to no end at all.

There is sensibility and charm in Mrs. Cust's work and a conciseness which is refreshing in spite of an occasionally over-poignant note in poems whose quality scarcely seems to support it.

> One thought
> One instant thought
> Resolves my whole :
> Sunders my dust to nought—
> Summons my soul.

Is an example of her addiction to rather fundamental finality at the end of her poems, which seems slightly to overbalance them.

Poetry from the Air Force is no rarity in these days, nor does it seem strange that this new and exciting enlargement of man's share in the universe should have winged the quills of even the normally inarticulate men of action who carry war into the skies. But in the volume published by John Lane, by the late Pilot Officer David Bourne (7s. 6d.), there is a collection of poems which seem in the main to owe less to the inspiration of the upper air than to that of Mother Earth. The poems of flight are properly described as war poems, but in our view the best things in the book are not in this section, but in those others where the author's experience was that of any man. Here he wrote with an insight and sureness which gave promise of an excellence to which his death has denied full development, but his days were not too few to demonstrate a natural mastery of words and a gift for expression, which enabled him to mirror for us an unusual spirit with entire simplicity and clarity. It is irrelevant, therefore, to enquire whether his work is mature or immature or indeed to bother with critical analysis at all. In him was the making of a fine poet and this promise is never more surely indicated than by a capacity to write well of ordinary things—to write of them, that is, without forcing or literary trickery, and yet to say things memorable and beautiful.

In essence, if not in his verse forms, David Bourne was traditional in that words were to him a means and not an end, and he sought with an unconscious certainty no other thing than beauty which, whatever the moderns may say, is not always in the eye of the beholder, but awaits in almost all things the revealing vision and the releasing voice.

We cannot close this notice without quotation, but to select a few lines which are typical of one so versatile is more than usually difficult and, when space becomes a tyrant and paper a treasonable luxury, long quotation is impossible. Let us quote the whole of a short poem called "Snow" :

> Dimmed horizons, thralled with doom
> Of ceaseless snow, encircle us.
> A blackbird sits disconsolate.
> The awkward trees take on
> Their new-becoming mantle with a grace
> That twice augments their beauty.
> And still the lazy puffs of white
> Meander down to coat the yielding world
> In folded robes, which sweep each curve
> Heavenward among the melting clouds.

This is the note of simple harmony which fell from him with an effect of sincerity and sufficiency which, because it always fitted his theme, illuminated it as only real poetry can.

A book by Eiluned Lewis is a promise of uncomplicated emotion, simple pleasure and good craftsmanship. These are all to be enjoyed in *Morning Songs* (Macmillan, 4s.), which is partly a record of a mother's delight in her baby and partly a collection of pieces upon more varied themes. But all alike have the same sure contact with sincerity and that mastery of the poet's craft, which effectually conceals her effort and effectively repays the reader for his. Yet these poems must be considered upon no very lofty level. They have music and charm in plenty, and often that complete inevitability of rhyme and cadence which is so satisfying; but we should describe them as minstrelsy rather than poetry, since they are content to appeal to the ear rather than to the deeps of imagination or emotion.

Yet one is ready to grant Mrs. Lewis all the freedom she needs to add to the simple beauties of life with these expressions of her own joy in them. She does it so well; and there is room and to spare for songs, even nursery songs, if they are of this quality and serenity.

Where will you find a truer picture of a pair of fond parents, sentimentalising each in characteristic fashion over a baby, than in the following:

Her father reflects — Her mother avers
As he watches her face — If there's aught so sweet
What a wonderful thing — As her daughter's hands
Is the human race. — 'Tis her daughter's feet.

But not all the authoress's attention has been caught by this familiar miracle of parenthood. She has a birthright of many other things which he is just as ready to celebrate:

For we are kindred — To pike and salmon
To lordly things, — To bull and horse
The wild duck's flight — The curlew's cry
And the white owl's wings; — And the smell of gorse.

These things complete Mrs. Lewis' world and she is content with it to the point of singing:

. . . . . I am content
Content as that one apple on the tree
Which no one thought to pick . . . . . .

And we approve her unalloyed delight, since she has so good a gift for communicating it to other folk.

The poems of a prisoner of war may have a vicarious interest because of the circumstances in which they were written, and nearly always have a nostalgic sincerity which gives them poignance; but in the book *Such Liberty* by John Buxton (Macmillan, 4s.) there is much more than this fruit of harsh experience to reward the reader. The nostalgia is there, of course, but it is harnessed and subdued by a poetic quality which should obtain wide recognition. Mr. Buxton was captured in Norway in 1940 and all but one of these poems were written whilst he was a prisoner of war. The exception, called "Landfall," was inspired by his first sight of the land in which he was destined to stay so long, and is as deft an imaginative association of a Norwegian headland with a Norse longship as one could desire:

See this long land has sails of snow,
And at her craggy stem
The silvery sheeny water parts in slow
White waves, that curl and go
To blue again.

Just as satisfying are the later poems—nostalgic at times, but never bitter. Here is a true sublimation of unhappiness in poetic utterance which is objective and subjective at one and the same time. He does not forget the fact of captivity in the mood of creation, but welds and fuses it into his work:

I watch the quick unEnglish river, grey
With thick snow-water from the spiky hills
. . . . . Beyond again
The sudden mountains rise up and invite
My cramped legs back to liberty—in vain
For everywhere the barbed-wire snags my sight.

But here and there one encounters a touch of cynicism born of frustration and despondency, but he never quite loses hold of his faith, with which indeed all true art is integral. In an elegy for a friend there is pessimism, but also a certitude of belief which, despite its pagan note, is firm and unshaken. We will quote the whole of it:

Rest now, rest: here's an end
To all your pain.
Rest while we others spend
Our lives in vain.

Here in this spruce's shade
Where snow lies yet,
Alone now but unafraid
Rest, and forget.

About you the forest grows
Careless of you.
There's nothing here that knows
The ill men do.

Above, the white mountains rise
Past the dark hills:
There no man lives nor dies,
There no man kills.

Rest in this solitude,
Rest, you who can.
No more do you intrude
As that fool, man.

We regard this sort of thing as a valuable addition to the poetry of these times. It has the individuality of all worthwhile creative work, but is quite unmarred by that aggressiveness which is so often mistaken for that quality.

Prisoner of war the author may be, although by the time this article sees the day he will, we sincerely hope, be free, but he is certainly no warrior. Rather is he an observer and recorder of exceptional power and beauty, whose enforced leisure may have quickened and deepened a gift which happier times might have retarded.

The book ends with a collection of sonnets which are not so good. This is probably due to the fact that the mechanical exigences of this form are alien to the simplicity of a talent which can express itself so well with so little technical aid.

Late in our list, but assuredly not among the least, came another from Macmillan, *The Martyr* by D. Page (4s.). Here is another worthy addition to the season's library of poetry, although again a first volume. The author has used a *nom-de-plume,* not for affectation's sake, but for anonymity.

Softer than gossamer about your head
My thoughts are sped
Cobweb and thistledown
Would weave a heavier crown
. . . . . .

The dandelion clock
Drifts with a ruder shock
Down the light breeze,
Softer, finer than these
Is tender love,

sings D. Page in verse which is light in one sense only. Indeed, there is too strong a flavour of Herrick and Herrick's quality in some of these poems to fail in a mission so subtle that few have survived its delicate difficulties. But the major half, we should

estimate, of the whole book is taken up by the title poem and in this there is matter of a very, different kind and inspired by a much later day and, whatever influences presided over its conception, it is an impressive achievement. Its individuality is unimpaired by its kinship and its imaginative brilliance, its vigorous drive and the impeccability of its rhythm make this effort in blank verse an unusual event in an age when so many attempt this exacting form and so few are successful in grappling with its difficulties. If drive and rhythm were all that is necessary, as so many seem to think, there would be some reality in the deceptive appearance of ease which unrhymed poetry has for the experimenter, but, in fact, the absence of that helpful stumbling block at the end of each line, the rhyme, with its compulsion to think again and again is more apt to hinder the imagination than to help it. Not to many do fine lines come with that spontaneity which dares to dispense with that wholesome cerebration over the line's ending, which makes it so often necessary to reconsider and recast the whole line.

But Mr. Page has succeeded and we might quote from any part of "The Martyr" and prove the propriety of our commendation. We will select a few lines written of a silversmith, Eumydros :

> He was a man raptured with simple joy,
> Trees in the wind, grass, flowers, light and airs,
> A budding twig, birds hopping, and white lambs ;
> The world was his to capture with his eye
> And ransom with the sureness of his hand.
> The quick responsive muscle of his thumb
> Swelled like a walnut when he gripped his work.
> Hammer and pad and mould and graving tool
> Grew to his uses like a wieldier arm.
> I watched him grave a deep unburnished frieze :
> The silver meadow flowered beneath his blow . . . . . .

Space forbids us more, but this is a poem to read and because of it to be glad that the voice of a greater day than this can still project a worthy echo to ears slightly deafened by the stridency of a revolt which mistakes change for progress and violence for vitality.

Anthologies, even those designed "to bring to the notice of the public new poetry," are scarcely matters for detailed critical survey. The individual contribution is, in each case, too slender to offer scope for individual comment and if any is to be made at all it must necessarily be of the book as a whole.

This particular volume is called *Sailing To-morrow's Seas* and is published by the Fortune Press at 5s. Introduced by Tambimuttu, it is, in the main, and as its fanciful title would suggest, a collection of verse which is consciously modern and "different," but which is, on occasion, relieved by a flash of beauty and an unrehearsed line. But there is, however, much therein which is deliberately brusque and a good deal which is nonsense of that clever sort which is typical of those who bring to the writing of verse a variety of talents, literary or otherwise, but seem not to possess that sensitiveness of perception and delight in beauty which is the poet's indispensable attribute.

We have received a book from its author, Mr. Juan Almendro, published in Cairo, which we are asked to review. We do so because we believe it to be our duty to encourage any creator of work of evident sincerity which, whatever its degree of merit as poetry, is, nevertheless, a testimony to a love for it and a desire for poetic expression, which this Society exists to foster. And in saying this we do not dismiss

To-morrow Is Soon (Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop) as a mere aspiration. It is quite certainly, and in a respectable measure, an achievement, for Mr. Almendro has the ear of a poet and a tender regard for beauty—things which are the more endearing in that they are by no means always apparent in new books of verse. We were, however, unhappily affected by such things as :

Make haste ! There is a dying dewdrop,
a crystal globe in final pose
lying in state on a bleeding rose,
rolling off, it drops . . . . . plop,

which is just what this otherwise charming stanza does. Nor do we like the mutilation of language to make rhymes, as here :

Comrades, see the sullen sun
sagging on the far hori-
zon and the withered coun-
try snuggle to the darkened sky.

But such things are the exception, not the rule, but while even Homer may nod, we do not recall anything more excruciating in its way than this.

We were struck by the author's power to communicate emotion where it has been strongly felt. Then his work has an air of compulsion about it which lifts it to a high level, free from gaucherie and self-consciousness. In "Western Desert" he writes such things as :

they have raped my repose, they
whom I held in life, or in death
have become grafted into my flesh,
forced within me by war's compulsion.

and again :

. . . . . I would weep,
but my tears are sand, and camel-thorn
my unalluring finery.

A first collection of poems by Laurie Lee, *The Sun My Monument* (Hogarth, 3s. 6d.), deserves a welcome, for the work is strongly individual and has a vigorous flame of its own. For in Mr. Lee there is nothing quiescent ; for him sleep is but a gathering of new strength and winter the regrouping of latent energies for a new period of growth. He has a pagan touch which brings all things into one communion of experience and desire.

The season does not leave your limbs,
like a covered field you lie
and remembering the exultant plough
your sheltered bosom stirs
and whispers warm with rain.

But there are intimations here and there of that love of bizarre expression which seems to be a modern development and which, so often, leads those who practise it into a disregard of sense.

The day she observed her limbs enchanted
She walked by the chapel with painted eyes
And bribed all the beggars and wept in secret
filling her blouse with the mask of a boy.

And the day I observed that I was a lover
I crossed the frontier to seek a wound

and fell with a fever above the Bahia de Rosas
letting the mad snow spit in my eyes.

I put her picture against the mountain
I covered the snowdrift with her scarf
and lay with her name across my haunches
chopping the ice in a fit of love.

There is more of this, but no greater clarity of revelation. Yet there is no denying the imaginative richness of this poem which, in spite of its chaos of images, still retains, somehow, an elusive and tenuous relationship with its theme.

But nevertheless such work falls within the category of the "curious," since it transgresses the wide freedoms of normal communication in one of the richest languages of all time, English, and deliberately seeks the far-fetched and recondite in imagery where there is room and to spare for far greater and more significant poetry without any such extravagance of invention. These images are too carefully thought out. None has an appearance of inevitability or of inspiration, indeed, they seem to suggest only the intrusion of a lively literary invention into a sphere where, if in evidence, it is out of place.

Consequently there was some relief in turning to a finely-phrased poem called *The Substitute* by Rebecca C. Thomas (Hocage House, 5s.), which is the story in unrhymed verse of the three wise men who came from the east to adore the infant Christ. The authoress has great pictorial skill and her narrative flows with an eloquence which is entirely suitable to the subject and which greatly enhances the appeal of her poem. The wise men start out from an imaginary temple :

Beneath the shimmering light of eastern noon
The temple stood. A pure white dazzlement
Of many domes attending one supreme.

and return from their enormous adventure to whence they came and fade from the scene. But the temple, as though now in the presence of a greater truth than that which it had been built to glorify, decays with the decay of the faith which conceived it.

But *100 Poems* by Edward Thompson (Oxford University Press, 6s.) left us in even less doubt of the ample facilities of our native tongue—facilities far too splendid indeed for the capacities of most men fully to use. But here is a man who, if he tries to carry you by storm, plays fair and uses no stratagems. If we are overwhelmed it is by our own obtuseness in not having been aware previously that just that effect could be so simply and clearly achieved by deftness with ordinary words. We say of his images "how appropriate" not "how extraordinary" and so we settle down, gladdened by the length of the book, to browse, ruminate and digest.

The poems are presented in a chronological order, which enables the reader to trace, in some measure, the mental and spiritual development of the author. This is an added interest to the discerning when there is matter of sufficient importance, as here, to make it relevant. The simplicity and quality of the author's style is well illustrated in the following poem, which seems to mark the stage of transition from the subjective ardour of youth to the more balanced and objective moods of maturity :

The man that has withdrawn a space
To tremulous ways of peace,
And seen that Leader face to face
Whose looks are light's increase,
Cleansed from all guilt, he sings, and knows
For him all paths run right ;

Shrived and erect, his spirit goes
Nakedly back to fight.

Now him nor hopes nor fears can fret,
Nor any griefs can hold,
Howe'er his heart remembers yet
Loves that have been of old ;
For him all works and strifes are o'er,
And, while the calm hours run,
He waits, as for the tide the shore,
And as the night for the sun.

Here is quiet power, a strong calm, which is as different as anything can well be from that filibustering violence which seems to hold such fascination for so many. But, nevertheless, it creates a much more lasting impression and decidedly a more wholesome one, with its sanity, than that which is left upon the mind by psychological ransackings of a Freudian twilight. Strength in poetry is not a matter of sex nor of shock-tactics of any sort, but of an imaginative power which can penetrate the unconscious and reveal to us again forgotten aspects of the truth ; which can endow us once more with that simpler vision, which we have lost in a maze of undigested knowledge and that feeling of superiority, which will have no reality until the process of assimilation brings us back once more to a humble frame of mind. That is why we dislike the free and easy pretensions of many modern poets and have a hearty preference for work like Mr. Thompson's, which glimmers and sometimes flames with insight through an integument of deft phrasing where every resource of art has been used to give the utmost clarity. The hundredth poem in his book called "Harbour Music" has the easy strength and subconscious humility which is the essence of the spirit of poetry. We wish we could quote it all, but the last three stanzas must suffice :

She (the moon) wanders till the morn
Shall drive her weakness hence ;
The prowling waters scorn
Her gracious impotence.

But still the impartial stars
Thrust back that raging crew,
Who may not pass their bars
Before their season due ;

Who plunge and peer and roar
And sullen wait the hour
The wind shall burst my door
And toss me to their power..

Poetry is the greatest of the arts, not because of some intenser difficulty in its practice, but because it is the only one which performs the function of all art, that of communication, in the universal medium of language. It has thus a limitless field, not restricted by or to the senses, for it appeals directly to human comprehension. Its aim is to reveal truth and in the doing to paint convincing pictures in the mind, and make compelling music in the mental ear, with no other material than the common words of everyday speech. If this be so, and we think most poetry lovers would agree with us, and certainly all the rest of the human race, what are we to call the following poem, appropriately entitled "L'Inconnue," which we quote from *Poems* by George Sims (Fortune Press, 5s.) :

Sleeping and sleeping in herself
her face outways
fleshes those looking through looking
as we know them and they know
What is it you say ?
that you have seen one without the actor
—a young man ? hunger in his hands ?
So have I, but an old man
face washed by tears and laughter
hands pressed wish, breathing long
and quickly.

We think perhaps the most remarkable work of superorogation we have ever encountered is the insertion of the two commas which we presume are intended to perform their usual office of assisting the understanding. Mr. Sims has more of this sort of thing for the hardy reader, but there are pieces and patches where a normal coherence is well observed.

You autumn bather who know
the meaning and melancholy
of the river, when sky intransigent
last gleams in shallows, shadows
counterfeit movement in the
pollards edge and wind pent in
woods and walls' coints escapes, sensual compels
the vacant waterface . . . . . .

And in such moods there is a quality which is deserving of praise. It is a pity that these lucidities should ever falter into incoherence as though the normalities of speech were inadequate to convey what he has in his mind to tell us. Here is an extract from another poem which should satisfy him as it did us with an individuality of expression which, however, does not exclude us from its message :

I spread her picture which I had so carelessly
played into my mind
Spilling her hair, in all its sun, behind my eyes

and we would venture to say that words require of their weilder at least that amount of discipline, for they are servants of the sort that can become tyrants unless they be eternally subdued to the exigences of clear communication.

Mr. Sims, where we can understand him with that ease which words exist to give, is excellent reading, but we are too often left to regret that he has failed to make us comprehend.

Padma Publications Ltd. of Bombay send us a volume, *The Ivory Tower* by S. R. Dongerkery (Rs., 2s.), which is a collection of simple songs, in the main well tuned and unexceptionable in their harmonious appeal, but which aspire to little but a musical tenderness of an uncomplicated sort. There is, however, a want of sophistication, here and there, in the use of words and sometimes in thought, which has an effect of gaucherie, as when the poet extols, "The maid's complexion free from speck," and we suggest there are rather too many examples of that destructive thing, the rhyme-word, to make it possible to express an unqualified approval of these poems, even upon their somewhat lowly plane.

Striking a higher note, but not very surely and with some want of sophistication in another direction, are the poems selected by Herbert Porter from his own work and published by Fortune Press (6s.) under the title of *Apollo in Attica*. The author

has too simple an approach to his themes—a matter quite different from simplicity of language—whereby he seems to skate, quite gracefully, upon and over his subject, quite unconscious of what dark depths may lie beneath. His technical skill is adequate, but by and large we think he needs to condense his matter, to distil his grain and to give us more of the deeper essence of things. There are too many mere descriptions only superficially related to human life and thought, and there is too ample a sufficiency of that sort of poem which has for its sole task, and task it is, the enumeration of the "points," so to speak, of time, poetry, childhood, etc., all with an air of discovery which, alas, since there is nothing new under the sun, nor can be (except, perhaps, the creation of new imagery in poetry), was unjustified. In the result the book is unimpressive and in spite of its industry and the tremendous nature of some of its themes provides but little inspiration for the reader.

35 Anonymous Odes (Fortune Press, 5s.) is the kind of thing which relies entirely upon that poetic necessity, good vibrant phrasing, but considers those ornaments of rhythm or cadence, and rhyme as largely unnecessary. It may be that these things are inessential to poetry, even although we do not think their absence a gain, and there is certainly much good substance in their twenty-six pages :

> Full, full of most sublimest songs
> I burrow like a Wellington into
> The most sad, the most sorry
> Air. O it is time the rhymes and the
> Roses came instead of the crimes and the
> Losses. It is time to be merry.

We do not admire the ungrammatical effect of double superlatives, nor did we understand why this was printed in verse form until we came to the last three lines with their internal rhymes, when there seemed to be a little more reason for it. But leaving these carpings aside, there is often a quality in these odes which, quite unrepentantly, we think would have been even better in a more traditional setting. Classic beauty is not enhanced by flannel bags and a sports jacket.

> O great properties of
> Poetry, divine and human love, I see
> The phoenix bird is bright
> At noon and at midnight,
> Flying always ascending towards the light.

On such a theme as this there is, we perceive, a rudimentary rhythm and some rhyming which we hope were an acknowledgment of the proper needs of this immortal subject. We are becoming concerned as to how many more poets are going to hide their light under this bushel of hyper-modernity, resting content to shed only a feeble radiance through the cracks and interstices of their self-imposed extinguisher, when they might so easily cast their illumination upon us all in clear rays made memorable by those graces which are the very echo of our own rhythms.

We were impressed with the appositeness of its title when we had read the next book, *Contrast* by C. R. Sanderson (Fortune Press, 5s.), except only that the want of rhythm or, if you will, traditional form, was similar ; but there the similarity most decidedly ended. We will quote poem IX to give an idea of how violent the contrast is in other respects :

> You asked for whisky or gin,
> For himself he ordered beer ;
> His money was rather well-earned,
> That, maybe, you hadn't learned.

More likely it'd mean nothing
If you knew, since gold digging
Is not very sensitive work,
Something from which you would not shirk.
Oh yes, perhaps it is his fault,
He needn't give you anything,
No blame to you if you just get
What comes to you, my little pet.

Which is just what we felt; somebody is certainly asking for it. The book is short, some seventeen pages, but not short enough.

What are poems? Mr. Christopher Middleton, in his volume called, simply, *Poems* (Fortune Press, 6s.), has his own idea, which is certainly not ours. Here is the same flat, unrhythmical note, but here also and differently there is a wildness in the use of words, not incoherent, but deliberately extravagent, which evidences a pretentious attitude of mind, as by a desire to impress. That words, like paint, should sink into the design, or the canvas, or both, is a truth which escapes many people, but so it is. When words draw attention to themselves they distract and when, having done this, they do not convince, we are left with little but a feeling of affront. We give one example of this extravagance taken quite at random:

One day all we shall come to the crystal night
Under the eccentric stars the mouths of trees
Make laughter into the cool cistern of the bone and
Under the water the lolling tears vanish.

There is a great deal more of the same sort in the book and there would be small profit in further quotation. We wish sometimes that like James Joyce these people would retire into a private world with a private language and there indulge to their hearts content this gift for the peculiar. The misuse of good English should be at least as serious a misdemeanour as the misuse of petrol.

SOME INDIVIDUAL OPINIONS

When I first read *Between Two Worlds* in 1941, I realised that E. Curt Peters, as the writer then described himself, was a poet with a future, for "To Some Modern Poets" and "Air-Raid" showed vision, a mastery of words and that extra something which lifts mere verse, however competent, into the realm of poetry. Now, under the style of Eric Peters, the same young poet, more than three years older in experience, both of life and describing it, has given us in *The Irreplaceable Melody* (The Fortune Press, 6s.) a book of poems, poems in the strictest sense, which more than justify my earlier prophecy. Here is a grasp of varied form, enshrining something to say, together with that mastery of words which makes the vision of the poet something to be seen by all. So far as the content is concerned the subjects are the usual range of nature, love and war, but there is a growing sense of wisdom shining through, a grasp of lasting values too much absent in the cynical and disillusioned output of to-day. He sees that our

self-love, self-pity are the true
begetters of our differing griefs,
which suckle at the breasts of pain,

and in "The Inward Flame" he sees the One in the Many, which is, after all, the root and the crown of all philosophy:

All universe is sphered within
Mind's limitless embrace:

Who sees it whole resolves the spin
Of time and space.

When yawns before us wide the maw
Of dawnless-seeming night,
We, dropping down death's fearful jaw,
Attain to light.

Of Eric Peters it may be said, as of painfully few others, that he errs, if at all, on the side of too much craftsmanship, a little too much conscious moulding of the form and polishing its final surfaces. But what a rare and welcome fault! These poems between them cover a wide range of form and he is not afraid to experiment. He has a nice sense of alliteration, and if at times the influence of Hopkins pushes through, why not? So that the master is used and not merely copied, here is a right use of another's pioneering. Of nature he writes naturally, and here no pun is meant; of war, he hates it as all wise men must; he writes of passion passionately, not prettily, and of love as one who knows that it can never be divorced from pain. Yet he can sing:

Who feels not moved to dance and sing
By wheatfields flecked with poppy-blood,
And sees nor sheen of beetle-wing
Nor harmony of bee on bud . . .

Who harbours hatred in his heart
And grudges good men honest gain,
He walks in lovelessness apart,
He treads the ravelled paths of pain.

In brief, here is a book to buy, to read, to read again and only to lend to trusted friends (if such there be with books of poetry) and how very rarely can such praise be given?

Since that memorable lyric, "Intimations of Mortality":

I am only the phrase
Of an unknown musician—

appeared in *English Poems,* Mr. Blunden has travelled far along a road where the outer scene is significant because of the vision behind the eye regarding man, beast and flower-life. It is always interesting to discover traces of the old in the new. The old, as represented by the great poetry of the past, here finds itself living in forms of fresh magic beneath the pen of a poet who overlooks not even the vole in the stream or

the fly so small that sight
Hardly could shape him.

He daringly employs the stanza of Collins's "Ode to Evening" for an effect very different—sculptured and severe and yet deeply creative—in "A Church." This implied (and at times stated) reverence for the worth-while in the past does not mean that the present is disguised as something different from itself. On the contrary, it is here interpreted, clarified and transmuted without the semblance of a shout or of striving after effect for effect's sake. Nothing would be farther from the truth, however, than to say that this poet, who writes in one lyric in his latest collection, *Shells by a Stream* (Macmillan, 5s.), "I hail magnificence," is not as trenchant as he is musical. Through a series of earlier volumes Mr. Blunden revealed for himself and his readers a many-coloured splendour in and below life's seeming incongruities. He is by temperament an optimist, as Browning was, and as Hardy was a pessimist. It is therefore striking to observe, from the earlier books to the later, from *The Shepherd* to *Near and Far* and now *Shells by a Stream,* an increasing capacity to set brilliance of

colour in a stark background. The result is possibly a lessening of the song-like element, but certainly an ultimate increase in range and expressiveness. The focus has shifted somewhat from the time when the world of strife and pleasure was viewed objectively, but presented with an effect of subjective rapture. Now it is rather a case of :

All so clear,
All so secret.

The reason for Mr. Blunden's success is, in part, that he never attempts to solve the secrets of the universe. Content to state life's dilemma, he finds so rich a variety of forms in which the mystery is enshrined, that the reader who goes attentively through his work (early, as late) is aware of a sense of inner gain all the time he is reading. There is that undercurrent of excitement specified by Coleridge—whom, incidentally, the poet addresses in one of the outstanding achievements of this volume for the fireside, the noble "To the Memory of Coleridge."

"Heart of high hopes and glance of eager day" no longer sums the protagonists in Mr. Blunden's work, yet the hopes are as high and the glance as eager as formerly. The opening piece in *Shells by a Stream* gives up :

It is not mine to choose ; the deeper call
Is master yet—

meaning, the living past which feeds the veins of the present, strengthening it. It would strengthen the present still more, much more, if poetry were to revive under the healing influence of the old masters, such as Chaucer, Milton, Byron. Mr. Blunden continues to show that their way is the best way.

Jean Fremont's lovely book *L'Ascension* (Oxford, Joseph Vincent, 5s.) may fairly claim to be of its kind unique. The title poem is a genuine example of that oft-abused term, the prose poem, and it needs no high degree of scholarship in French to appreciate its subtle beauty. Subtle is here the proper term, for though called a poem the lay-out meets the eye as prose, and it is only when one begins to read aloud to the inner ear that the delicate rhythm and internal rhyming begin to emerge, as a print in the acid bath, as verse. And as this verse is alive throughout with a crescendo of creative meaning, together with the elusive element of beauty, this is by all accepted standards a glorious poem. Subtle is again the right word for its contents, a blend of mystical idealism and deliberately brutal realism which makes of its twenty pages a memorable work of art. There follow a number of poems in conventional verse forms, though mostly alight with the same beauty, and these are followed by extracts from an essay on modern poetry. Here the writer's built-up mysticism, as it were, is rather lost in extracts, but in a number of *"Poemes en prose lyrique"* he returns to his own inimitable "spread-out verse," if I may so describe it, and in these fragments, ranging from an epigram to his own Credo, his message and his chosen form are once more integrated. If the final item in the book, *"Manifeste pour un novel 'Humanisme'"* is a trifle vague, it is at least exhilarating, and I heartily recommend the book as a whole, first for its intrinsic loveliness, but also as an example of what poetry, though in another language, ought to be.

Of the *Fifteen Poems* by Francis Meynell (Dent, 7s. 6d.) few have that solidity of worth that makes for remembering. Here, at least is imagination still preserved, for I hold that we all have it as children until parents, cynicism or success remove it. Did you, the author asks :

Did you, when you were five
Play ring-a-roses round the slow-foot second ?
Go distant journeys twixt the tick and tock ?

For the rest, they are by size or subject hardly to be classed as serious poems, serious in the sense of the art and craft of poetry.

G. S. Fraser has called his first book of verse *Home Town Elegy* ("P.L.," 6s.). Here is the raw material of good verse but hardly yet its mastery. When he does rise above the commonplace he is apt to strain his metaphors. Soft and warm, like silks from a woman, the snow is laboured. He is perhaps unconsciously self-descriptive in "Image in Lamplight":

I crane my neck and I look up.
A branch is craning down to me
Whose frail and floating bubbles sup
Upon that dark electric sea . . .
I muse on the irrelevant
And on the subtle tricks of chance
That make a poet lean and gaunt
And frame his mind to elegance.

I found *Irish Poems of To-day* (Secker, 5s.) no more Irish than *Modern Welsh Poetry* (reviewed in the last issue) was particularly Welsh. These poems, we are told, have been gathered from four years of the Dublin magazine, *The Bell*, and it may be that the editor of that publication rather than Geoffrey Taylor, who edits this, is to blame for the strangely flat and arid style which most of these poems possess in common. There is much preoccupation with unrhymed decasyllables, but "blank verse" needs a lot of handling, and when it fails is dull indeed. In Irish verse one looks for imagination, and here we find little; for song, and there is little; for wit, and there is none. Yet "Recession" makes one want to see more of Patrick MacDonough, though "Hornpipe," by Cecil Day Lewis is, ironically enough, the best and most Irish poem in the book. Of writers, W. R. Rodgers sticks most in the memory, and "The Party" is worth quoting in full:

So they went, leaving a picnic-litter of talk
And broken glitter of jokes, the burst bags of spite:
In comes Contempt, the caretaker, eye on ceiling,
Broom in armpit, and with one wide careless cast
Sweeps the stuttering rubbish out of memory,
Opens the shutters, puts out the intimate lamp,
And, a moment, gazes on the mute enormities
Of distant dawn. And far doors bang in mind, idly.

It is always interesting when a musician invades the realm of the printed word, and Dr. Leigh Henry, known far and wide as a composer, conductor and writer of books on music, is equally interesting, if not quite so successful, in verse. In *Leigh Henry* (Glyn Press, 3s. 6d.) in the Poet-Musician Series, this modern exponent of the great Celtic tradition shows both his musical training and the influence of his native Wales. Here is unquestionably the stuff of true poetry; criticism can only be directed to the extent that the form is worthy of the inspiration. It is always easy to criticise adversely, but it is curious that Dr. Henry's faults should come from a musician. He delights in long, slow, heavy sentences, laden, if not over-laden, with adjectives, and these can only be successfully handled when the rhythm is impeccable, and the rhyming, which the ear is led to wait for, equally correct. Too often, however, the rhythm is broken in a way no conductor would allow, and "blue" and "dew" are *not* in rhyme. Moreover, for a composer these compositions in verse are curiously unfinished, leaving one again and again with the impression of what to the painter would be a preliminary sketch. Suspension dots overdone can be maddening, as in

"Swans" :

A sudden shaking of the reeds
ripples the pool . . .
. . . a dazzling whiteness cleaves
through the tangled leaves,
fresh, dripping and cool—

All this, however, is destructive comment on the form, and what matters is the life. Here is a poet, writing poetry, and whether he is writing of Celtic legends and ballads, of his own impressions on hearing some other composer's music, imitating, with great success, the Chinese short and delicately painted forms or, as in "Mousme No Odori," giving an English version of a sixth century Japanese poem, the same sensuous, almost luscious imagery is there, and makes delightful reading. But please, Dr. Henry, no more dots, and may these fugitive impressions be honoured with the polished, clear-cut forms which they so well deserve ?

The Personal Principle : Studies in Modern Poetry by D. S. Savage (Routledge, 10s. 6d.) arrives opportunely in these distracted and poetically-purblind times. Mr. Savage has written a book of first-rate interest which the discerning will acclaim with enthusiasm. Impartial, unhysterical, authoritative and honest, this book, which appraises at its proper value the work of six representative modern poets will be, we hope, the precursor of others as good and as interesting.

The author in a cogent preface defines his aim with admirable clarity and precision, and proceeds to a masterly essay which is something of a *tour de force*, wherein he establishes the general background of movements and ideas against which (in Part Two) he evaluates with scrupulous discrimination the creative attitude and poetry of several modern poets. Yeats's exotic, esoteric and aesthetic limitations are nicely assessed ; Eliot's orthodoxy and late poetic bankruptcy ; the peculiar significance of the "Americanism" of Hart Crane ; the dilemma and dissolution of D. H. Lawrence's heterogenous assortment of values and badly-focussed vision ; and finally "The Strange Case of W. H. Auden." Like all the great creative critics Mr. Savage is endowed not only with "the poet's eye," but also with that exquisite and essential brand of humour and commonsense that provides balance, perspective and proportion. These are easily the best short evaluations of Yeats, Eliot and Auden that have so far come our way, and we congratulate both author and publisher on so notable an addition to critical literature.

* * *

1 : A thought on "Poets and Pretenders" :

God bless the poet, art's supreme defender !
God bless (no harm in blessing) the Pretender !
But who Pretender is and who is poet,
God bless us all ! it's only God can know it.

2 : *Et dormitat Homerus*, but I am surprised at your learned critic, Mr. Howard Parsons ; still more to find that he has the weight of Sir James Murray behind him. I think he underestimates Pope's critical acumen. Surely in line 347 of the Essay "low" is not a term of abuse but of description, and indicates words derived from the Anglo-Saxon and not the classical languages, which (to Pope) have a loftier bearing. And he is right. If you are writing heroic couplets you need more than a seasoning of the more sustained and flowing Latin words. That is why "At once the source, and test, and end of art" is a good line, because it does *not* contain ten "low words," but "And ten low words oft creep in one dull line" is bad, except as an illustration, because of its ugly clipt effect : JOHN FERGUSON, Bexleyheath.

NEWS FROM MOSCOW :

POETS AND POETRY IN WAR-TIME RUSSIA

THE POETRY SOCIETY has received the following wireless cable dated :

"Moscow, August 6th.

"U.S.S.R. Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries begs to inform you that a literature section has been organised under its auspices comprising membership of more than hundred outstanding writers, poets, critics and literature students. Alexei Tolstoy, member of U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, has been elected Chairman, Pavel Antokolsky, Boris Gor Atov, Samuel Marshak and Constantin Simonov Assistant Chairmen. The bureau of this section includes writers Milhail Sholokhov, Ilya Ehrenburg, Leonid Leonov, Boris Pasternak and others. One of the section's aims is to establish broad cultural contact with literary organisations and writers of Great Britain, to keep our English colleagues informed on achievements of Soviet literature and acquaint literature circles in the U.S.S.R. with the life and work of English writers. Please all requests to our section, care of Cultsviaz, Moscow.

"Members of Voks Literature Section are sure that you will lend every support to their initiative. Fruitful co-operation between writers of our two countries, who are using their art as weapons against Nazism, common enemy of progressive humanity, will serve to promote friendship and closer contact between English and Soviet culture and to increase mutual understanding of our two peoples.

"On behalf of the bureau of the literature section—Alexei Tolstoy, Samuel Marshak, Constantin Simonov. Transmitted by the Society for Cultural Relations Kislova."

Effective steps are being taken to promote the desired collaboration, including the continuous interchange of views and information and of representative delegates. As a beginning we are able to publish the following notes and reports from Moscow :

THE WAR POETS IN CONFERENCE.

At the ninth Plenary Session of the Executive Board of the Union of Soviet Writers, held in Moscow, Nikolai Tikhonov, a poet and citizen, whose fine work is known to the whole country, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Executive Board of the Union of Soviet Writers. Vsevolod Vishnevsky followed Leonid Sobolev in characterising Nikolai Tikhonov as a warrior writer who maintains vital ties with the army and is dedicating all his energy to the cause of victory over the common enemy of mankind—Nazi tyranny.

"Before the war," Tikhonov, in his report, said, "our literature centred its attention on man as the builder of a new life in the city and in the collective farm, as a business executive, as an engineer taking part in giant construction projects, as a Komsomol building a city of youth in the taiga, conquering the Arctic, indefatigable, eager for knowledge, living in the romantic world of happy youth. To-day this man is being tempered in the furnace of war, enduring all manner of trials and tests and performing unforgettable exploits. The principal hero of our literature in war-time is truth. We do not want to forget the calamities which we have suffered, the days of bitter battle or the way in which the country strained its every effort to win the victory. We do not want to array our soldiers and our officers in the dazzling raiment of the legendary man of prowess, nor do we want to limit ourselves to mere descriptions of battle scenes. The truth about the war is a story that should grip heart and soul, that should reveal the moral grandeur, the profundity of the Soviet man's magnificent spirit. Indomitable will, incredible stamina, iron tenacity of purpose, understanding and awareness of what is happening, readiness to sacrifice self, lofty consciousness of duty, these are the traits inherent to the Soviet soldier, the Soviet woman, the old

man and the stripling. Confronted with the threat of enslavement, brought face to face with mortal danger—the national pride that glows in the heart of every Soviet man burst into a clear and steady flame. In the charred ruins of Stalingrad, in besieged Leningrad, in the steppes of the Ukraine and the forests of Byelorussia—wherever tremendous battles were fought—this national pride was what actuated the Soviet man whenever the crucial moment came and he hesitated not to sacrifice his life for his country and its future.

"Constantin Simonov is the spokesman of the modern generation, the generation which has seen the battles of Halhin-Gol, the liberation of Western Byelorussia and the Western Ukraine, and the grim winter of the Finnish War in 1939-1940. This is the generation of young people whose honour it is to participate in the most terrible of encounters between two worlds. Charged with unbounded energy, this generation has no fear of 'squandering' its strength, and this is why we meet Simonov in all genres. We know him as a writer of prose, as an essayist, poet, playwright and scenarist. One day we see him in Odessa, the next day near Moscow and the day after we hear of him from the snowdrifts in sub-arctic regions ; the next glimpse we have of him he is in Stalingrad, immediately after that he is with the army on the right bank of the Dnieper and then in the forests of Polesie, and to-day we read his dispatches from Gomel. His hurry, his eagerness for first-hand impressions are fully warranted. He himself goes out reconnoitering, he himself goes into attack, he is at the observation post and he is at the Volga crossing under enemy fire.

"Simonov was the first to bring 'Russian people on to the stageboards.' He makes no startling discoveries. These are the people who are all around us, the army is full of them. But he has been the first to put them down in black and white and this is what he most deserves credit for. · Simonov has written poems which soldiers and officers carry next to their hearts, because these poems are the articulate expression of their own feelings. He has poems of love like 'Wait for Me,' but he also has other poems, poems of hatred for the enemy, such as 'Kill Him.' On the frontlines books are regarded as precious comrades and the soldier looks after them as carefully as he looks after his rifle."

"A new military genre has come to life in our literature," the poet Alexei Surkov declared in his speech. "This is the genre of literary journalism, which before the war, was usually represented only by Maxim Gorky. To-day we have many writers engaged in literary journalism. Ilya Ehrenburg, I would say, is the leading master of this genre. Vasili Grossman's series of Stalingrad sketches are not mere sketches, but vigorous, stirring journalism. In this genre, too, are many sketches by C. Simonov and B. Gorbatov, the latter of whom has made interesting progress from his early 'Letter to a Comrade' to his two journalistic narratives."

The Leningrad poetess, Olga Bergoltz, spoke about the great themes of modern times. "The theme of the war," she stated, "the theme of national trial and of the human spirit are loudly sounded in our finest literary works and they have brought us, writers, the most precious boon we can know—the growing trust and love of the people towards writers and their works. In these lofty themes there is still much unchartered ground, but we remember Leo Tolstoy's injunction that the writer has to write about things inherent to all mankind but not yet known to it. There will be much seeking and errors are only too possible, and this makes collective work necessary. I feel confident, however, that we will create a great literature—and this will be the literature of militant good."

"A great people should have a great literature," Ilya Ehrenburg said in his speech. This idea, expressed variously, was developed in the speeches of Constantin Fedin,

Alexei Surkov, Anna Karavayeva, Vera Inber, Marietta Shaginyan, Simon Kirsanov and other authors, in speaking of the writer's tasks to-day and after victory over the enemy will have been won.

"Soldiers carry our books in their kits, the writer's words are heard on the front-lines," Vera Inber said. "Let us try, therefore, to make every word of ours, every book, a true treasure of Soviet literature, whose mission it is to be inspirer, agitator, historian and annalist."

The Origin of "Manas"

The Kirghizian epic poem "Manas" has recently been the subject of serious discussion in the Kirghiz branch of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. To date history has been unable to establish the exact date of the origin of the authors of this remarkable national epic. In his report, based on his discoveries of numerous sources, Dr. Bernstam, acknowledged authority on Kirghiz history, places the origin of the poem in the eighth or ninth century, which witnessed the greatest political upsurge of the Kirghizian tribes in their struggle for independence. On the basis of Chinese and ancient Turkic sources, Dr. Bernstam dates the origin of the first version of "Manas," some hundred thousand lines, to the 'forties of the ninth century. He presumes that the prototype of the hero of the poem, the Kirghiz knight Manas, was a definite historical person, namely, Yaglakar Khan, leader of the Kirghizian tribes in that era.

The Institute of Philology, Literature and History of the Kirghizian Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. is at present undertaking a thorough study of all the twelve versions of "Manas."

"The Four Seasons"

It is now one hundred and twenty-five years since the appearance of "The Four Seasons," by the great Lithuanian poet, Christian Donalitius (1714-1780). The author did not live to see his poem published, for it appeared only thirty-eight years after his death and almost fifty years after its writing. Once published, however, it immediately brought the poet posthumous fame. At an evening held in the Moscow Writers' Club in honour of the anniversary of this poem, the Lithuanian writer, Korsakas, told the story of Donalitius' life and work and discussed this classical example of Lithuanian poetry. Fragments from "The Four Seasons" were read by the actress, Kimonataite (in Lithuanian), by David Brodsky, author of the Russian translation, and by Merited Artist of the R.S.F.S.R., Mikhail Tsarev.

Books at the Front

Simon Tregub, *Pravda* war correspondent, reports that Gennadi Buldakov stated that his favourite poet was Alexander Pushkin. He pronounced the name with that tender accent in which one pronounced only the names of those who are very dear to one. "Then there are Lermontow, Nekrasov, Mayakovsky. You have to get used to Mayakovsky: he is a great poet and therefore unusual." You may think that Buldakov has such a fine understanding of literature because he has had a special education. Nothing of the sort. In this respect he is a plain rank and filer. Before the army he was a factory-hand in the city of Frunze. This man has something else, something more valuable than education. He has that natural, healthy substance in him that allows a man to see and feel and understand and to live correctly.

Folk Story-Tellers at the Front

Some time ago the Nadezhda Krupskaya Central House of Folk Art sent a group of story-tellers to the front, among them such noted story-tellers as Ivan Kovalev, Anna Sukhoverova, Fyokla Bezzubova, Alexandra Rogozhnikova, Elena Chichayeva

and the collective-farm poet, Anton Novikov. In their tour of the front these authors of folk songs and tales appeared before military units and sub-units spoke with the soldiers and officers and told them about the great industrial victories being achieved by workers in the homefront.

In all the story-tellers presented about two hundred readings before the units of the army in the field, at which they told 1,200 patriotic tales about to-day's great war. Among these tales were Ivan Kovalev's "The Great General Stalin," Anna Sukhoverova's "Spread Far, Oh Dnieper, Like a Snow's Tablecloth." Fyokla Bezzubova's tale about the Red Army as the liberator of Soviet land, and Alexandra Rogozhnikova's tale about the heroes of Krasnodon.

The appearances of these folk story-tellers in the units met with a warm response among the men and officers. The folk songs and tales sung and told by their authors created a profound impression. Among the frontline men the folk story-tellers met people from their own parts—from Archangel, Gorky and Siberia.

A Poet's "Fighting for Leningrad"

"Together with the troops of the Leningrad front I traversed the roads of these perilous battles—from the distant approaches to the city of Lenin to the fringe of the blockade." These brief words define the contents of the book *Fighting for Leningrad,* by the poet Vissarion Sayanov, published by the State Literature Publishing House in Leningrad. Sayanov's book consists of notes jotted down on the front-lines from June 22nd, 1941, to January, 1943. Vissarion Sayanov tells how Soviet people fought for their glorious city. To them Leningrad is not merely an assembly of houses, palaces, squares, embankments and bridges, but a living being beloved since childhood and forever.

An exhibition on "Leningrad Writers in the War" was recently opened in the Mayakovsky Writers' Clubhouse. The exhibition occupies two halls and consists of up to three hundred works published during the last three years. Besides the books written by individual authors there are sixteen anthologies of the works of Leningrad writers, published on the front. Special stands are devoted to the work of Nikolai Tikhonov, Alexander Prokofiev, Vera Inber and others.

Poems of the Country, on Love and Wrath

The State Literature Publishing House in Leningrad has published a new volume of verse by Alexander Prokofiev called *Accordion.* These verses were inspired by the poet's thoughts and feelings as a Russian to whom there is nothing dearer than his native country. When speaking of Soviet Russia, Alexander Prokofiev finds an inexhaustible source of images, colours and rhythm. He is stirred by and takes joy in the boundless expanses of his country, in the sweeping lilt of Russian songs, in the mighty growth of his country's industry and in the valour of his fellow Leningraders. Besides lyrical poems the section devoted to songs also contains ditties, a popular form of verse in the units of the Leningrad front.

Alexei Tolstoy

The writer Alexei Tolstoy enjoys great popularity in the Soviet Union. This may be seen partly from the record editions and numerous printings of his works. Thus over four hundred editions of Alexei Tolstoy's works have been published since the establishment of the Soviet Government in a total of up to 10,000,000 copies. Most popular of all his works has been *Peter I,* which has had sixteen printings in a total of approximately 1,300,000 copies. Alexei Tolstoy is at present working on the third volume of this novel about Peter I. He adds: "The last eighteen months I have also been working on a dramatic narrative about Ivan the Terrible. I have

already written two plays: 'The Eagle and His Mate' and 'Difficult Years.' Both embrace the most difficult period of Ivan the Terrible's rule—the years of his maturity."

Alexei Tolstoy is also simultaneously continuing his work on Russian folklore. He is editing a series of Russian folk tales, the first volume of which was already published last year. The second volume is scheduled to appear very soon, while the following volumes are now being prepared for press. Alexei Tolstoy's plans for this year also include the writing of a play on a modern subject.

175th Anniversary of the Birth of Krylov

Ivan Krylov was a great Russian fable writer in whose work the Russian national character, Russian life, the national cast of mind and national colour, were revealed with particular fullness and power. It was with ample reason that Pushkin, who highly appreciated Krylov, wrote, in comparing him with La Fontaine, that "simplicity of mind is an inherent trait of the French people. It is just the opposite with our people in whom the distinctive feature is a certain merry archness of mind, humour and picturesque style of expression. La Fontaine and Krylov represent the spirits of their two nations."

Krylov came to be a true Russian poet, whose fables, familiar to us from childhood, have become proverbial and a recognised part of our national culture. In his fables Krylov briefly and expressively continued the satirical themes of eighteenth-century journalism. His pronouncements, the "moral" of his fables, are profoundly national. Krylov's moral is the sober, democratic moral of the people, reflecting a profound knowledge of human nature. Krylov's fables teach honesty, nobility, kindness, conscientious attitude towards one's duty as a citizen, love of country. These moral principles Krylov proclaims in the realistic, generalised images of his fables, which are profoundly national in their meaning, language and style.

Mountain Bard

Hamzat Tsadas, popular folk poet of Soviet Daghestan, recently marked the fiftieth anniversary of his literary activities. Fighting for the triumph of the new life, he ridicules the survivals of the old. In his "Donkey Slaughter," "Admonition" and other verses, Tsadas ridicules backwardness and ignorance with subtle humour. The verses of Tsadas have been very efficacious in winning the mountaineers of Daghestan over to culture and education.

The sharp contrast between the old life that is dying out and the new life that is triumphing is one of the principal subjects of Tsadas' works. Educated by Arabists and possessing a profound knowledge of the culture of the Orient, Tsadas, at home in his native mountains became an ardent advocate of the culture of the great Russian people. Hamzat Tsadas has done much to revive the heroic traditions of the past. He transplanted the favourite heroic theme of Avarian folklore into literature and revealed it in a new manner. His poems about Vasili Chapayev, the famous hero of the civil war, are very popular in the mountains.

The verses written since the present war hold a special place in the work of Tsadas. In 1942 a volume of selected verses by Tsadas, *For Our Native Country,* was published in Daghestan. It consists of two parts: "Land of my Birth" and "For Our Native Country." The first part includes verses written before the war. Tsadas links his thoughts about his country with Daghestan and his native aul (village), but he is nevertheless far from local restictions. In his best verses the poet leads his mountaineer reader from thoughts of his native aul to the thought of the whole of our great country, of Moscow, the Ukraine and the whole of the Soviet Union. His verses ring with pride in our Soviet country and our glorious Red Army.

The second part of the volume consists, in the main, of verses dedicated to the war with the German invaders. In this cycle the poet returned to his favourite genre—satire—which in this case he directs against the mortal enemies of mankind, the Nazis. Hamzat Tsadas' satire is active, caustic and seathing: it teaches hatred of the enemy and calls for vengeance. It is quite natural that in their letters home the Daghestan men now on the front lines should ask to be sent every new verse written by Tsadas, for to them his verses are also arms.

Tsadas is the founder of national dramaturgy in the mountainland of Daghestan. His dramaturgy, too, is directed against the hateful enemy. The two plays he has written since the war—"Bazalai" and "An Encounter in a Battle"—tell of the valorous exploits of Soviet people. Tsadas is a truly national poet—a citizen and an ardent patriot of his country.

NEW BOOKS: A POEM BY PAVLO TYCHINA

Pavlo Tychina contributed a tender, palpitating note to Ukrainian poetry with his first volume of verses, *Solar Clarinets* (1918). The critics immediately applauded the musical quality of his poetry in which everything both nature and human life, is always in rhythmic motion accompanied by a musical undertone, which has come to be recognised as the distinctive feature of this poet. Colour, form and sound are inseverably fused, as may be expected of a young author who hears the music of the solar rays and perceives nature as a verdure hymn, while his own emotions are like the sobbing sonority of a bandura.

His poetry is indeed tender and palpitating, but at the same time it has a manly, characterful quality, it does not restrict itself to the purpose of affecting the reader's emotions, but expresses a consciousness of the poet's responsibility to his country. This consciousness is most powerfully evident in the poet's latest volume of verses, *The Day Will Come* (1943). In the course of this war the poet has witnessed the unexampled villainies of Nazism, has felt the bitter experiences of his country as his own, has himself witnessed the colossal might of our army of liberation, and in this volume of verses he marshals his words so that they crash out like a brass band.

Essentially this volume of verses is imbued with the will to struggle and victory. All the poems are on one and the same theme and yet, as is always the case with Tychina's poetry, the volume presents a wide range of genres and emotions. It includes marching songs and a highly patriotic ode, a sad ballad of the sufferings of his motherland, a humorous popular song almost in the style of Berangen, a wrathful sermon against the abominable enemy and a warm address to the fraternal peoples participating in our common cause. The poet is profoundly national, Ukrainian, but at the same time he clearly sees himself a Soviet poet, a friend and brother of the Russian, the Bashkirian and the Uzbek. The most monumental work in the volume is a poem called "The Funeral of a Friend."

It is a winter evening, with the sky sadly changing its fiery red robe for a dull violet one (the wealth of hues and shades in his poem is remarkable). The author, the first-person of the poem, is shovelling the blue-tinted snow from the walk in front of his house when he suddenly hears the wailing of an orchestra—a funeral march. Some soldier who perished in the war against the Nazis is being carried to his last resting place. Perhaps it is the author's friend, Yaroslav, who perished heroically in the bitter battle for Kharkov? Only to-day his death was announced over the radio. No, Yaroslav was being buried somewhere on the front. Well, and suppose this was not Yaroslav who was being buried here: is not this other who defended the freedom of our country which sheds its light on all the world just as dear to him? And so the author follows the procession to the cemetery, sees and hears the soldier's

mother who bewails the loss of her Stepan, hears the speakers, the last volleys of the guns fired in his honour and again the receding lament of the orchestra. Then he returns home. In a brief map in his little hut, against whose thin walls a dry twig taps gently, he has a fleeting vision of the victory that is to be, while in the distance there is the dying sob of the wind instruments, the muffled clash of the cymbals and the dull, receding thud of the drum.

That is all there is to the poem and yet this is only the bare skeleton of a thing of such beauty and depth of feeling that no account of its contents can give any satisfactory conception of it. Despite its apparent simplicity its effect staggering. The descriptions and the whole story is presented in the form of a monologue, written in iambic pentameters. The monologue alternates with songs—a requiem which at first breaks in only for a line or two and then, taking the upperhand, temporarily silences the solo of the narrator, and then again and again interrupting the concluding part of his story.

The central place in the poem is held by the requiem, presented in the form of a chorus—a chorus because, as the poet himself once said of himself, "I will speak and feel for every one," and because on this new and higher step of his creative powers the soul of the poet himself is many-voice, vibrating to the feelings of other as well as to its own emotions, which have become so manifold that it sounds now like an organ, a chorus.

Against the background of a masterfully-painted picture of a sad winter evening, against the background of simple, easily comprehensible words of wrath that arise at the remembrance of the wily enemy, of thoughts about victory, the unity of our people with other freedom-loving peoples, the words of the requiem, written in slow, six-feet iambic lines, and often containing a hidden meaning, ring out with particular solemnity. Everything changes, is renewed, tears, perishes and again arises from the earth, takes on new forms, constantly grows laughs—and no powers of death can overcome this law of eternal, universal life. The people are invincible, the people cannot perish: other soldiers come to take the place of those who have perished and the vigour and valour of the latter are reborn in the new soldiers. It is no longer grief, but the powerful idea of vital freedom and truth that lifts the poet's soul in its arms like a child, so that the poem concludes with a triumphal march.

The publication of the new poem, *Judgement in the Forest,* by Yakub Kolas, national poet of Byelorussia and Stalin Prize winner, is a happy event in Soviet literature. The poem treats of the heroic struggle being waged by Byelorussian guerillas against the Nazi invaders. Its heroes are people of various walks of life, ages, education and upbringing, but all of them have been brought to the forest and united together by their common hatred of the would-be enslavers of their country. The poem is written in a very dynamic style The characters of the guerilla fighters, Peter, Nikita, Ivan Gurba and grandfather Gamyra are portrayed in the course of intense activities and bitter fights against the enemy.

The author makes wide use of popular proverbs, sayings and folk humour. He tenderly reproduces in his verses the images, sounds and colours of the Byelorussian landscape. His *Judgement in the Forest* conveys in living and concrete artistic images the majesty of the struggle being waged by the Byelorussian people for our Soviet land.

A new volume of verse by the Azerbaijan poet, Suleiman Rustam, has recently appeared under the title of *The Day Will Come.* In this volume the poet tells of the struggle for the Soviet people for an independent free state. His poems reveal a tender love for his country. The poet evokes stirring pictures of the unity and fraternity of the Soviet peoples.

One poem pictures an Azerbaijanian, Kazakh and Russian, recalling their loved ones before a battle and speaking of the happiness that awaits them when the war is over. The Azerbaijanian invites his friends to visit his peach orchard. They will have a Caucasian feast, with singing and dancing to the strains of his national musical instruments. Even the rocks, the grey rocks of the mountains, will sing then!

Suleiman Rustam's topical verses are especially good, his heroes are animated by the breath of life. The reader feels their living breath and cannot help loving them. There is the old veteran who is deeply hurt because he is not accepted into the army despite his age, and the postman who feels so sorry that there is no letter for a mother who is waiting so anxiously for news from her son.

Suleiman Rustam has a fine feeling for form. We find among his poems pathetic verses like "The Vow," which brings Mayakovsky to mind, and languid oriental ghazals. The latter are often transformed from lyric love poems to passionate songs to our world, than which there is no sweeter, brighter or dearer. His ghazals inspire us to action, to struggle in defence of our country.

A new book of verse, *Born With the Tempest,* by Sheikhzade, one of the most noted poets of Uzbekistan, has recently been published. It contains poems written chiefly during the war and on war themes. Sheikhzade's poetry is primarily poetry of thought. Every poem of his contains a clear philosophical idea The finest poems in the volume are "Captain Gastello," "Judgement will be held in Berlin," "The Father," "Our Moscow" and "Country, Command," and they all testify to their author's talent and skill.

* * *

VERA MICHURINA-SAMOILOVA—A LENINGRAD PATRIOT AND POETRY SPEAKER

Vera Michurina-Samoilova is the last representative of a famous Russian family of actors. Her grandfather took part in the first productions of the Alexandrinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg over a hundred years ago; her uncle, Vassili Samoilov, who also played in the same theatre, became famous throughout Russia as an actor and unsurpassed master of make-up. She and her mother enjoyed the friendship of Nekrasov, Turgenev and other famous men of the nineteenth century.

People's Actress of the Soviet Union and Stalin Prize-winner, Vera Michurina-Samoilova has been connected with the Alexandrinsky Theatre (now the Pushkin State Theatre of Drama in Leningrad) for over fifty years. Here she had her debut, here she grew up as an artist and here she became renowned. Only once did Michurina-Samoilova part with her theatre. That happened in the autumn of 1941, when the theatre was evacuated. But Michurina-Samoilova stayed on in Leningrad.

"Why didn't you leave with the theatre?" I asked her. She smiled, "If a dear friend of yours was seriously ill, would you leave him? No! Well, how could I leave my native city in adversity? I knew I could be of use and stayed."

And, indeed, she did a great deal of work. During the siege she organised what is now known as "Theatre before the Microphone," producing classical works of Russian dramatists over the radio. Often Michurina-Samoilova recites poems and reads stories over the radio. "It was a theatre without walls," she said, "and when I performed in the studio I was inspired by the knowledge that not only Leningrad audiences, but front-line fighters were listening."

She showed me a pile of letters from officers and men of the Leningrad front—long messages and notes scrawled on bits of paper during brief rest periods—thanking her for her radio performances, asking her to recite their favourite poems and writing about their life. The actress answers every letter and sends books to her correspondents.

Michurina-Samoilova's house was built by the brilliant architect Rossi and stands opposite the Pushkin Theatre. During the siege a bomb had exploded nearby and the blast had shattered all her panes and killed seven persons outside.

Michurina-Samoilova is president of the Leningrad Branch of the All-Russian Theatrical Society, an active member of the city Red Cross Committee, a member of the commission to ascertain the damage inflicted by the Hitlerites on Soviet citizens, and president of the Pushkin Society. She told me how admirers of Pushkin marked the anniversary of the great poet's death a year ago.

"Prior to the war we used to meet every February 10th in the house of the Moika where Pushkin died. On the 10th of February last year the Germans were shelling the city since early morning. When I picked my way to the Moika shells were still dropping fairly near. However, at the appointed hour we were all assembled as usual. Pushkin's flat had been damaged by shells, the windows had been smashed, in some places the ceiling had fallen. In that half-wrecked room I made the opening speech before the poet's bust. Then I recited the poem written on the occasion of Pushkin's death by another great Russian poet—Mikhail Lermontov. Shells were bursting outside, but I thought to myself, the Germans may wreck Pushkin's house, but they cannot destroy his memory. It is the same with Leningrad: the Germans could destroy individual houses and streets, but they could not destroy or break the city, just as they cannot break our people."

IRENE SEGEDI.

THE CHERRY TREE

The cherry tree, she is thrice blessed,
Three times a year in beauty dressed!

First when the cool clear spring's begun,
With snowy bells in garlands hung,
By April breezes lightly swung.

Next, in full summer she's bedight
With pendant jewels, ruby-bright,
In clusters rich, on stems so slight.

Last, in the fall, her every leaf
A painted glory, gorgeous, brief,
A matching carpet at her feet.

The cherry tree, she is thrice blessed,
Three times a year in beauty dressed!

EILEEN SPACKMAN.

LOVE'S MOMENT

A MOMENT full of love that burns like fire—
How short a time compared with all the years
So cold and drab that follow in its train!
Yet to its glow are drawn the shivering years
That in its flame they may be warmed again.
While to the drab years it becomes a cloak
Of rich and precious weave that drapes them round
So that they walk as kings, erect and proud.

ERIC VAN HAGEN.

FIR TREE

And when I see a fir tree . . .

I see
Little candles burning bright and clear,
And tinsel and toys . . .
And log fires burning bright.

And I hear the happy laughter
Of children.

And I see a star
Brighter than all others . . .
And shepherds
Following,
Following . . .

And I see a manger
And a new-born babe.

HUGH WYKE.

TO MOTHER

YOU who have loved small friendly lanes awinding
The majesty of moorlands wide and bold.
Cool dewy fields star-pricked with gentle daisies,
How do you bear the streets of shining gold ?

You who have heard the lilt of lyric lark song
The stir of happy streams, the muted lyre
Of feathered busyness in slow dawns waking.
How can you care to hear the heavenly choir ?

You who have known the spell of little children
The wonder and the soft dreams in their eyes.
Felt kinship with the vain, the frail and foolish,
How do you fare among the great and wise ?

ELIZABETH S. BROOKS.

A BOOK OF DAYS

OUR kalend symbol, dearest One ! shall be
The previous flower that heralds changing days ;
To Him, the Giver of fecundity,
Its perfect grace, as votive cup, we'll raise.
No month shall find us barren of our joy,
For we will trace His cavalcade's swift course ;
By bounteous largess, free from base alloy,
Of primrose, celandine and fulgent gorse.
The crocus clad in Cypris-saffron bright,
Myosotis, hyacinth and tulip tall ;
The pink, bud-blossoming of May delight,
And wine-dark lilac massed against the wall.
Then, summer's pageant ; autumn's regal shows ;
And last, the pure, frost-scorning Christmas rose.

G. S. ODDY.

THE ANCIENT TREES

HOW shall I sing of England? Long ago
Poets have sung such things as poets know;
Sung of her rolling fields with harvest white;
The glory of her daytime and her night;
The mists of evening and the hush of dawn;
The symphony of song that greets the morn;
Beauty of fruit and flower; the wild life
Filling each hedgerow with its love and strife;
The rhythm of the seasons and the ways
Of countrymen, whose still, sequestered days
Are bound, as days of men in long-gone-by,
By changeless fiat of the sea and sky.

These, the enduring glories of our land,
Great men have sung and having heard their lay,
Shall not so small a singer silent stand?
Yet—I was coming homeward yesterday,
Home from a Midland city, bleak and drear,
Home to a tilth with clay beset and sealed,
That pasture where I roamed for many a year,
An unkempt filly in an unkempt field,
And as I watched the sombre, dark terrain
Unfold in memoried lines of corpse and hill,
No beauty stabbed, with mingled joy and pain,
My watching heart, but something in the still,
Pendulous, brooding shapes of great trees dwelt,
As soul in body, subtle and inwraught,
A pattern and a meaning, to be felt
In heart and spirit, not by reasoned thought
Conceived. It was as though the human life,
Sprung from, sustained and passing back to soil,
Laid on the land some shadow of its strife
And tall trees bent with burden of its toil.
I saw the soul of England, secret, grave,
In potency to such mysterious power
As each insensate tyrant dreams to have
And each unwitting freeman holds by dower.

The soul of England! Neath her ancient trees,
She dreams her ancient sins and sanctities;
I saw her standing, silent and withdrawn,
Dreaming—before the dawn.

I. M. HUBBARD.

THE POET IN A FACTORY

MUCH have I striven, and perceived much good
in this dailiness. No one can accuse me of rejection.
Out there the bright, hellish machines turn with their
smoothe, never-ceasing hum, and hands twist levers
and press the hard, intricate knobs with graceful motion.
Even here I have found beauty, amid the sweat and

tangled hair and the thick, smothering stench of oil.
Even rising when it is still dark as twilight, when
the wind blows harshly across the dirty roofs,
and passing through the furtive, ugly—how ugly—
suburban streets, I have walked as though the proud
possessor of my body. And of the many who have
intertwined with the mechanical routine, I have
received the best they had to give: their staunchness,
their blind, ancient native humour, and all the
goodness of their universal character.

Oh, but my heart longs for the peace and beauty
of my own way. And do I ask too much, then?
the tender slope of green, the silent room,
the hours of gentle, joyful contemplation, and
that precious freedom wherein to be enslaved
to the power that drives my blood and beats my heart?

Ah then, how long, how long before these humble
circumstantial tools be to my hand? How long before
I'll be forgiven for shutting out all that is other
than I, grating and ludicrous and spirit-sapping?
How long before the effort to accept, the opening
of arms with smiling grace, and forced enjoyment
of this secondariness, that eats away little by
little the enormous inner space—soon can it cease?
For always the angel whispers and calls and entreats,
mildly, imperatively, all-pervasively, yet I
dare not, I dare not go, lest all my defensive, hard-won
loving be turned to sullen and resistent hate.
But shall I lose you at the last, and when I turn to
nurture you again, shall I find only appalling emptiness?
Will you be altogether fled? From over the world
comes dragging at my heart the distant din of strife
and misery and horror, and within the small voice urges
"While this remains, there is no peace for you."

JOANNA P. COCHRANE.

LONELY PLACES

I LOVE all lonely windswept places,
Far stretching hills whose silence calls
To depths within my heart which answers,
As grey-blue mist of gloaming falls.
Deserted woods with shadows creeping
Amongst the pine trees' columned aisles,
Where swaying branches surge with music—
True sanctuary after weary miles.
A moor whose breast is brown with heather
As winter bids it sleeping lie,
While overhead the curlews crying,
With haunting sob pass slowly by.

EDITH A. VASSIE.

TINTAGEL

THE sun is at rest in the sea, and the evening has fallen
With no stir in the air, and no sound of the wind that has fallen
But only the ripples that whisper, "Tintagel! Tintagel!
King Arthur sleeps far from Tintagel!"

King Arthur lies sleeping so long, and the great ones have left us—
The enchantment, the might and the magic of Merlin have left us,
And only the seabirds float, crying, "Tintagel! Tintagel!"
And the lonely stars look on Tintagel.

So the moon that enormous and dusky, swung low at her rising
Like a flame—you could warm your cold hands on the moon at her rising—
Now shines high and cold in the sky over rocky Tintagel,
On the moon-silvered rocks of Tintagel.

The gorse will be gold on the cliffs in the sunshine of morning,
The lark and the mavis will sing in the light of the morning,
But never a queen in her barge sails the seas of Tintagel
And King Arthur sleeps far from Tintagel.

D. E. Christine Tomlin.

From a nine years' old contributor.

DARK, Dark lane,
Through the forest!
In the night
Stars shine bright
Through the leaves
That seem hanging from the sky.
Through the dark, dark way,
In the forest of the night,
The great winds come
Rushing through the Trees,
Great storms knocking down
Oaks to the floor.
It went calm—and calm,
Everything stood still,
And gradually it came morning,
With a sky of pinks and yellows,
And purple and blue,
Across through the Trees.

II—SLEDGING

THE icicles fall from the trees.
They glitter, they glitter,
Like glass in the sunshine
As they fall drop by drop
From the trees.
The sunshine is bright in the trees.
The robins whistle on the branches.
They are red like drops of blood on the snow.

Now the sky is grey and grey and grey.
I don't know where it goes to
At the top of the field,
But we leave it behind
As we sledge down the hill.
We swizz down, down, down,
Down, down to the bottom,
Like swimming through the air.

Matlock. Ben Edmund Buxton.

THE TRAGEDIAN

ALL the long day his histrionic art
Welds his least word to fit the part he plays,
And action follows simply, as his heart
Ably conceives that which his role portrays;
Knowing with what a nicety of skill
And subtlety his lines he must construe
To make the scene subservient to his will,
Conceal behind the counterfeit, the true.

But when the curtain rises on the stage,
Then, then it is he gives his sorrow rein—
He is himself, and the dim audience gauge
Unwittingly the measure of his pain;
Lauding the act which is his secret shame,
The man unknown, not artist, they acclaim.

L. M. Miller.

DESIRE

FROM the dark womb of Earth
Forth there sprang desire,
With plumage of bright gold
And eyes that shone like fire.

He leapt upon the winds,
Sporting with power and pleasure,
And, in enchanted lands,
Discovered hidden treasure.

Then, throned among the spheres,
When the brief day was spent
He gazed upon the Heavens,
Seeking Divine Content.

Spirit with heart of dust—
How shalt thou aspire?
O Joy with gilded wings
Thou canst soar no higher.

Then cast away thy gold;
Fly through thy prison bars.
In God alone is rest:
Pine not amid the stars.

C. W. Cockerell.

THE SWAN

(For C.T.D.)

UPON the lake,
frail willow fringed and gleaming
in the wind-washed blue of the sky,
she sailed in slow white stateliness;

and breast to breast
and black beneath her white
sailed her sister shadow-swan.

The hunter's finger
curled on the
shot-winged instant
that was death.

Beneath the lake,
in evening mists grown still
and soft and grey
as the breast of a dove;

Only the sister shadow-swan
sailed in mirrored solitude,
lonely as forgotten love . . .

W. S. Eldridge.

THE WOMEN WEEP

THE women weep in battered towns,
Standing in groups by smoking walls.
Words can condone, but not divert
The bomb that in the darkness falls.

Certainty that this war is just
Cannot erase a bloody stain.
A time comes when the heart rebels
At its cold overlord, the brain.

Good motives why a child should die
From my well-tutored reason leap.
Only the blind and reckless heart
Chills slowly, as the women weep.

JACK BEECHING.

TO MY WIFE

ON OUR DAUGHTER'S FOURTEENTH BIRTHDAY

THE features that are thine remain secure
Within thy daughter's lips, her nose, her eyes;
The transient grace of youth cannot disguise
The bloom which now unfolds, and shall endure:
The world shall say, "Her charm, it doth ensure
True beauty's heritage; it is a prize
More rare than that which in her mother dies,
It is a flame that burns both bright and pure."

A fool may count the apples on a tree,
But only wise men can prognosticate
The trees that in an apple lie, and see
The latent powers that time will elevate:
And so, thy child, an apple come from thee,
May hold thyself unnumbered unto fate.

Sergt., R.E.M.E. EDWARD BAKER.

TO A FOUR-LEAVED CLOVER

BECAUSE of days when eyes were strained to see
Thy waiting face—upheld for freshening showers—
Of value far above the price of flowers,
Prove now, O Talisman, the magic key
Which opens my love's heart again to me;
That I, rejoicing in thy wondrous powers,
May be at last rewarded for those hours
Of patient search, Emblem of Luck, for thee.

Then will I watch at dawn, thy four-leaves green
Expand—and laugh as when they first began
At eve, to fold them in a little fan:
Soft be thy sleep, while thus I watch unseen,
For thou shalt lie—when death doth intervene—
In my love's book, thy soul at rest with Pan.

KATE ELLISON.

EASTER SONG

CAN it be Winter still
That trees yet shine
Brown upon the hill ?
Lacing their branches fine
Across the rising field
As if in their own
Long shadows shade.

It is not Winter,
It is Easter,
Though the wind be cold ;
For the shadows have begun to shine
Light and shadow shine together,
Misty bright, over the meadow.
It is Easter . . . .
And a power has moved
Over the face of Earth,
And here in this old Orchard
The apple trees have felt its breath.

Keep very still . . . .
And you may see
The most ancient apple tree
Shift, ever so slightly,
Her old grey shawl ;
Ever so lightly
Not to be seen . . . .
Then rest awhile,
Be very still
And if you but watched between
Her branches the blue hill.
Then, presently, she will smile,
You will feel her smile,
For now she knows that you
Are knowing now that she
Has felt the touch of the King
And thinks of her near blossoming.

But do not speak . . . .
Nor may you fully hear . . . .
For she speaks in that first language
That only unfallen man has heard ;
The primal urge, the gesture,
Rhythm, the song of bird ;
Speaking in holy wisdom,
Moving in perfect freedom,
In which there is no choice ;
For in the will of God
Lies their only peace.

The trees brown smoke arises
Up from the flowery field ;
And surely, within those shining barns,
Among the sun and shade
That streak the straw-lit yard,
Surely . . . . the King has passed ?
And will there not be singing
And the sound of harps ?

The sound of harps
Among the apple trees,
For the King has come
And with Him have come His friends.
Of all men is He the friend
And He would have men sing ;
He would have them know it Easter
And that Easter . . . .
Is Spring.

He would have all men happy
And grateful for what life gives.
Yet still are some who hold
To the newly-bloodied cross
And to His agony
Again would bind Him.

But holy Earth will sing of Spring
No matter what evil men may do.
She is His bride and she will bring Him
The love and joy that men deny Him.

IVERY BARTHOLOMEW.

EACH INTO BATTLE, 1944

SINCE now, my only love,
We must consign each other unto danger,
You to the treachery of battle and the seas ;
I to that fly-by-night intruding stranger,
Since we've no choice, my love, to go from these ;

Since now we have to turn
Each from the safety of the other,
Know this for truth, that you abide
Not as a husband or the dearest lover
But very heart within my aching side.

P. E. CROOME.

THE BLACKBIRD

COOL silence treads these woods—
Dew-damped,
A greener green than lightened seas.
They wait for music . . . . .
Whispers in the trees
And paths, and streams where the soft rushes lean
Cry "Come."

The blackbird sits enthroned,
(The quivering branch is stilled)
Eyes bright in his dark coat,
Burnished beak lifted,
Lifted tail dark-quilled,
With liquid sounds uprising in his throat,
He waits.

Then shoots the clear keen note,
The listening paths rejoice,
And Man's dull brain
Wakes to Spring freshness,
Breathless at the art
Of birds ; and with a new enlightened voice
Sings too.

D. M. Holliday.

THE JOY OF LIFE

FROM head to foot
And shoulder to shoulder
I am a cross.
I am a creature
Walking in the wind,
Living joyfully in myself,
My spirit like a fountain
Leaping, leaping,
Shooting high into the sunlight,
Breaking in silver spears
Against blue skies.

My feet walk on the pavements,
Through the woods in England,
Over moor and pasture.
By my feet I am fastened to earth,
Part of her, bound to her.
Her thrusting power leaps upwards
Through my veins,
Joining my spirit ; she and it
Surge upwards, surge into the sunlight,
Break into ecstasy around and above.

Subaltern, A.T.S.

How wonderful is life !
Death has no part in me.
Only this upward surge,
This mounting of violins,
This travelling of waves,
This joyfulness
At the cross's centre
Singing, singing.

How wonderful is life
That is a part of me ;
A part of the green belts
And the trade winds,
Jungle and coppice ;
The wild earth
Glorious in shape and colour !

And death is still life.
For a flower, or a fox, or a man, dying,
Become as earth ;
Are the beauty of brown soil
Bared as a ploughland.
And life soars on
In the wheatfields and grasses.

Evelyn Watts.

A SEQUENCE

By the author of *Alamein and other Poems.*

(I)

MY spirit by sweet sadness has been kissed
While listening to her patient, plaintive song.
I have no heart her soft eyes to resist
And so I bear with her the whole day long.
She tells me of her pity for mankind
Who, dreaming of the stars, crawls on the sod
And thus is neither animal nor God
And falsely faithful, peace nowhere can find.
And so by unforgiving fate pursued
We come at times to hate both God and devil
We who can rise nor fall to neither's level
And neither's cruel sanctions can elude.
Thus sadness oft must haunt our dreaming soul
Until we make our lives one faultless whole.

(II)

A poet's last and sweetest inspiration,
The rising moon is added to the night
To prove that in the mystery of creation
Beauty was known and had her sacred right.
Thus darkness claims the evening sky once more,
And roofs with stars her velvet dark pavilion
To-day once more, as through the thousand million
Unnumbered aeons that have gone before.
We cannot count. Who knows when it began ?
What mind can grasp creation's mighty stages ?
Yet this I know—that I am made, a man,
Out of the vortex of the swirling ages
And in the wastes of dead eternity
This moment lives, for beauty and for me.

(III)

To-day is stranger to all yesterdays
And with this dawn my self is born anew.
To that new self let me to-day be true
And let no other influence my ways.
Let me remember past experience
But make of it no bible past my wit
And not dismiss as mere impertinence
All novelty that does not square with it.
Life offers me a field wide as the sky
Wherein my own adventures I may choose
Then let me not a single path refuse
Because before I have not passed thereby.
For if I move not with the spinning world
Then at a tangent I to hell am hurled.

Port Said. CYRIL HARREY.

THE PARTING HOUR

THE textureless shadows surge,
Gather blackness to their folds
And are blotched
With the patterned paleness of faces
Peering, searching, seeing.
Not darkness, but secret images
Hung in the private view of memory.

Hand gropes to hand.
Coming up out of the cuff, seeking assurance :
Voices stumble, heavy-laden with parting words ;
Feet shuffle, on platforms they stand before train doors
Patient pairs, forming fours.

In the arched dimness a girl leans
Towards the wall, eyes closed,
Half sick with love. Her soldier stands
A stalwart screen between her too-revealing face

And the close and curious crowd.
Soon, too soon, he'll catch the train
And she will turn unshielded and alone
From the cold eye's wound.

This is the hour, throughout time of man.
This is the now, the repetitive parting,
That has broken the body's well-being
And torn the faithful heart.

IDA PROCTER.

SONG

(First written in the year 10,000 B.C.)

O, WHAT did the blackbird find to sing
Before he sang of you ?
And what lent speed to the swallow's wing
And painted buttercups gold in spring
And tossed the snow on the hawthorn tree
And touched the hills with blue ?

For little they knew, and could not guess,
Those old, benighted birds,
That fate delayed with its power to bless,
And earth was lacking a loveliness
Past all the tales of the summer sea,
Past vision, song, or words.

When you, beloved, are dead and gone,
How will the redbreast fare ?
Will the sun be darkened, knowing he shone
Once on a world worth shining on ?
Please God, I'll never be there to see,
And no one else will care.

BARBARA LEA.

PRE-DAWN

AROUND my curtained inlet laps
The fretting, pre-dawn sea :
Each wavelet violently wraps
The world away from me.

Dumb, twitching stars look bleakly down
From their vast sea beyond
Those grey-cowled hills that, shivering, frown
When Morning waves her wand.

A moist, intransient silence flows
Over unpebbled space ;
Reaching my fingers and my toes,
Submerging mind and face

Beneath great heaving waves of fear
That flood my gloomy cove,
And break . . . . when I have grasped the dear
Warm fingers of my Love.

ETERNAL STRIFE

THE guns that make an end of life,
Bellowing fire through fog of war—
These are the flashing thews of strife :
No more.

This burning barrel in my hands
That tremble with a cold desire
To lay the foeman where he stands,
Is hate's false fire.

Beyond our turmoil two dread Powers,
Contending since the world began,
Thrust and parry, through silent hours,
For the rich prize of man.

When the slow pulse of time grows still
One Power shall deal the mortal blow :
Man shall attain the topmost hill,
Or perish far below.

SHINING LADDERS

WHEN I behold a rainbow
Looping the earth and sky
I gaze upon the ladder
That dazzled Jacob's eye,
And watch, with breathless wonder,
The radiant forms that go
From rung to rung, and heavenward,
From rung to rung below ;
And think how earth and heaven,
So closely intertwined,
Are full of shining ladders
That only dreamers find.

WILFRED H. BARTLETT.

EXILE

I, TOO, can see the water lie
With scarce a line upon its face
As full of silence as the sky
And lovely with immobile grace.
We talked in murmurs, hushed and slow,
Our secret thoughts, our dearest dreams,
Of what we'd do and when and how,
And pondered strange domestic themes.
Then, in those moments, did we frame
And from our love a world create,
And fondly dwelt upon a name
What time our love was consummate.
There will be times again, sweet wife,
When faith will gain its recompence,
And dreams will live beyond this strife
Fulfilled in dear magnificence.

Captain, M.E.F., 1943. ORCZY-BARSTOW.

WORDS

WORDS I would choose
Jewelled and ornate
Diligently to use
Fashion and create
Loveliness.

O mere words that mean
So little or so much!
Fragile things, yet which
At the touch

Of sorrow or love
Soar upwards
On gilded wings
Vibrant, vital, living things. AUBREY LEES.

EVENING

THE quiet little church upon the hill
Stands ageless in the mellow evening light.
Above reposeful valleys, calm and still,
A white owl, watchful, hovers in its flight
Against a sky of blue; the sinking sun
Gilding the meadows with its long, low beams,
While country sounds fall sweetly, one by one
Upon my ear, to mingle with my dreams.

I feel a sense of timelessness profound,
The sundial on the wall knows not the hour,
And peace untold, made deeper by the sound
Of a far-distant train; and a strange power
Of seeing past and future meet and blend
Into a present that can know no end.

MARGARET E. H. BARRON.

SWEET PEAS IN A CRYSTAL BOWL

THOUGH wide the casements to the silent dark,
Tobacco, and well-bred obscenity,
Charged the close air with smoke and ribaldry.
The innuendo and the light remark
Left on the air—and on our minds—their mark,
Yet could not stain the perfumed purity,
The virgin grace, and pastel harmony
Of blooms held in this crystal bowl's bright arc.

Soft and unsought came memory of you
Light as a breeze that dies upon the flower
Beside the night-cooled stillness of the green;
As lightly came and passed, but sweeping through
The staleness of my mind with gentle power
Healed it and sweetened it, and left it clean.

W. H. DENNETT-MORGAN.

POEMS A-MAKING

WHEN heirloom gems are spread before the bride
She murmurs "Exquisite," and thinks aside,
"They must reset these things."

She gently fingers them and swift devises
Rare designs, to suit their shapes and sizes,
New pendants, bracelets, rings.

So does the poet turn the books of ages,
And as he loves and lingers o'er the pages
A wild wish, urgent, springs.

To thread these words that everybody uses,
These sweet old themes that every poet chooses,
On fine new twisted strings.

Spun on the Wheel of Life; drawn through the Fire
His trembling fingers fit them to his lyre,
And all his being sings.

NINA WITHEROW.

THE POEMS OF DE LA MARE

SOMETHING obscure and dim and something clear,
Something renewed and something old and sere,
Something so deep that doth the soul immerse—
Are all in the magic of his verse.

Something of nonsense yet of common sense,
Something as free as air and something tense,
Of light in darkness and of dark in light,
Summer in day and winter in a night.

Something so lovely that it has no name,
The touch of shadow and the feel of flame,
The tale in scattered petals of a flower—
The lingering footfall of a dreaming hour.

IRENE H. LEWIS.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: CIII

Day of Deliverance by William Rose Benet (Alfred A. Knopf, N.Y.) is on my desk for review. Between the covers of this new book this writer has captured the horror, the terror and the devastation of war. Let me give you what he himself says about the book in a letter just received from Pigeon Cove, Cape Ann, Mass.:

"I haven't yet seen copies of my book, being up here, but am glad you have, and like it. I don't know quite what you wish in the way of a remark. The book is composed of poems written under stress of feeling concerning the war. I am now fifty-eight and, having had a thrombosis several years ago, I was not to be in uniform. But I have tried to do what I could with my pen, both for our war effort and for what we may be able to accomplish after the war. I am completely an interventionist against aggressors and one who hopes that world peace may secure a firm foundation after the war. I am for a hard—not a soft—peace. It is the only way. The effort we must make is only begun. But all these things are truisms. As for me, I try to work ahead in the best way I know, through the *Saturday Review of Literature* and often in my own kind of verse."

The publisher tells us of Mr. Benet's interesting life, filled with successive honours. The Benet family was favoured by the gods with the divine gift of poetry. His brother, Stephen Benet, recently dead, stood in the forefront of poetry, and Laura Benet, his sister, has a most gratifying and gracious ability.

William Rose Benet, in 1942 the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, was born in 1886 at Fort Hamilton, New York Harbor. The grandson of Brigadier Stephen Vincent Benet, one-time Chief of Ordnance and son of Colonel James Walker Benet, of the Ordnance Department. William Rose Benet, along with his sister Laura and his brother Stephen (the second Stephen Benet), spent his early years as an "army brat" travelling from school to school. Graduating from the Albany Academy, Albany, New York, in 1904, he entered the Sheffield Scientific School (Yale University) in the fall of the same year and three years later graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy.

From 1911 to 1918 Mr. Benet was a member of the staff of *Century Magazine*; then after a short association with an advertising concern and a year as assistant editor of *Nations Business* Mr. Benet went to the *Literary Review* of the *New York Evening Post* (1920-3), and from there in 1923 to the staff of the *Saturday Review of Literature* as poetry critic, columnist, and more recently, contributing editor.

Mr. Benet's first volume of poems, *Merchants from Cathay*, was published in 1913. Since that time he has edited, written and published some thirty-five volumes—poetry, one novel, short stories, juveniles, anthologies and critical essays.

Yale University gave him an honorary Master of Arts degree in 1921, and in 1933 he was made an honorary Doctor of Literature by Dickinson College. He is at present a Vice-President of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

Turning to the book and glancing through the titles, which all concern the war, we find poems called "Dunkirk," "Prayer for England," "R.A.F.," "The Middle Watch," "The War Dead," "Lidice," "The Bombing of Rome," "The Army of the Dead," and at the last, "Prayer for the Nations." By this abbreviated list you see how wide is his consideration of this war. Let us take a stanza or two from "Prayer for England," written September 27th, 1940:

To-night and every night
God save England!
To-night and every night
while fires are still alight
where roaring skies rain death—
so long as men have breath
for all free men to fight—
God save England!
God save the Right!

Not for those men of state
who'd have saved England
for a false few grown great,
greed breeding endless hate,
shamed peace in chains again
and perjured word and pen—
but strong against such fate
God save England!
and all true English men!

There is at times a touch of cynicism in some of these poems, which to some of us is very welcome. Reading the first stanza from the "Welcoming Committee," and the last, proves this point:

"Oh, they're right-minded boys." And they'll be met
by the slick Salesmen, with their foreheads wet
For fear the fighters may not understand.
They will come back to their conniving land,
Or rather to those who only can survive
Within this land because they still connive.
They'll meet the loud applause, the big glad hand,
The pressure groups with banner, and with band.
They'll hear the speeches wherein the eagle soars,
The words of men who know no wounds of wars,
But how to turn wounds, death, and fires of hell
Into big profits—Oh, who know so well! . . . .

The men from Hell returned, who still have breath,
And their dark memories of wounds and death,
Sight of the starved and homeless and betrayed
By the busy men by whom this War was made;
Yet always in their hearts, and dreams, kept warm,
Some white Connecticut house, or Kansas farm,
or California bungalow—will these,
Bronzed by the desert, wind-tanned from the seas,
Glad in revulsion once again to stand
Within the portals of their own dear land—
Will their new eyes, that looked on naked steel,
Gaze through the unctuous ones, whose deeds reveal
Their enmity to the world common weal:
These "Interests" with their "fixers" smooth and bland
Before "Old Glory," yes, and hat in hand—
With things new-planned to suit their ruthless will—
Will These command? The boys believe them? Still?

The Golden Mirror is the fourth book to reach us from Marya Zaturenska, a native of Russia. Coming to America as a child, she has made her life here as an author of distinction. Her poetry has received many awards. We commonly admit that any volume bearing the publisher's name of Macmillan is worth while. I am looking through the pages to find something that I like and something that you will like. One short enough to give in its entirety, showing clearly the Russian note, is "The Soundless Room":

Eternity too long have I
Lived in your damp and soundless room
Where the heart chills, and the tears dry
And all things light and lovely lie
Consumed in piercing memory,
Slight flowers thrown on a weighted tomb.

Lost in that pit where patience lies
In iron weight, where pitch and slime
Water the monstrous bloom of time,
The flowers of pain whose clime
No healing water knows,
Dark in silence flows.

Rise from the depths, pale sleeper rise;
And let the living rain pour through
The marble gravity, let dew,
Let morning, noon, and evening blue
Restore your weary eyes,
Your evening eyes renew.

In the romantic trend we find "The Eyes":

The children sing at night when they are frightened—
And I singing when my heart was heavy,
Saw again the Eyes that filled the universe that brightened,
The withdrawn blood.
I saw them in the floating air when night unclasped its hood,
O but they are the same! eternally the same!
The long glance light-irised, the brilliant blue,
The middle vein of dark,
That sweet and powerful look,
And again the small house with deeper vision shook.

I too recall them. O my night, my joy, my hope, my woe!
Beautiful and unwelcome Eyes, that from falling steeps of sleep—
Fall, rise, and rising fall.
(Cerulean, angelical)
Frequent your visitations now, I keep,
Remembrance of a face where you once lived,
Sensitive, glancing, gay,
Fixed for ever on a blue flower that obscure alone
Illumined gross, softened stone—
The bright face and the blue flower vanished, but the Eyes stay.
Those Eyes in which I gazed my life away.

We find in opening *Poems from the Desert*, by Members of the Eighth Army (Harper and Bros.), a foreword by General Sir Bernard Montgomery. Quoting from it:

"These twenty-seven poems by officers and soldiers of the British Eighth Army were all written under fire in the midst of one of the greatest campaigns of this war—while Rommel was retreating across the Western Desert. They express completely the thoughts of these men—thoughts of battle, of the desert scenery and the desert smells, of the sun-baked cities of North Africa, of love and of home. They are simple, moving and often nostalgic expressions of fighting men to whom, for the moment, war has become a profession. In these verses one can see something of the climate of the British mind, and something of the greatness of mind and spirit, of devotion and love of freedom that has fired this army through to victory."

We have no parallel in the history of poetry of this collection, written under fire, with all the terror of war. It appears a sacrilege to choose from these war-wrung

poems, but a private, W. E. Jones, has written "On Parting," which we give:

No, No, my love, e'en now the eloquent, lucid deep of those fond
eyes must not be veiled
with mists of tears. True our absent hours will creep
and crawl as if the Sands of Time had failed,
making actual Death's immutable Eternity,
with the stupor of an exiled heart asleep.

But those rich eyes were made to speak of Love—so clear
and yet profound they can express
what words alone could not. Their memory brings Thee near
to me, and 'tis but this lonely nearness
of Love that makes the changeless days endurable.
—Then do not cloud their message with a tear.

We select another of these arresting poems, this time written by Gunner F. J. Flaherty, entitled "... But Not Forgotten":

The hungry crash of guns, the charge of lean
Unconquered men, the rock-strewn sand,
The shivering in a dawn wind keen;
Facing the menace of a mine-pocked land
Sown thick with death, and hatred, fanned
To desperation by each fresh defeat.
The long pursuit, first life-renewing sight
Of white farms placid in a lazy heat,
Green grass, green trees, and flowers that might
Have bloomed in English soil: the sky, soft light
Of new-moon rise on palm-tree bordered sea.
The sudden rain, and eucalyptus trees that weep
Their gusty tears in rustling reverie
For those who fought and won their last, deep sleep.

Following the review of the gallant men who have fought and died, a poem "How Can I Hope," in Jessie Heiner's *Beckoning Path* (Wings Press), draws us:

So short in time, since starting on your journey
So long to me it seems;
So dim my light that seeks to follow after
Except in dreams.

You who on earth all venturing embodied,
Whose quests no failure marks,
How can I hope through unknown worlds of beauty,
to trace your path of stars!

This is a first book by this author. Another lyric, "Worlds," from this slim volume follows:

Outside, the clouds meet snowy hills;
The woods are silent, silver blurs;
No footstep seeks the snow-lost paths.
No stealthy, hungered creature stirs.

But in my lovely world of song,
Bright dawn burns gold, soft sunsets flame,
And youth and age go gaily by
Singing their songs of deathless fame. ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

I HAVE been asking myself what has happened since last I sat in judgment upon the entries for this competition, that they should show so inspiring an advance, such an all-round improvement. I put firmly away the thought that the difference might be in myself, that certain personal experiences had affected my critical acumen, for I have never approached my mammoth task in better heart, nor experienced less cloudiness of mind in dealing with the many hundreds of almost infinitely varying entries which, this time, came for judgment. I was neither hurried by want of leisure, preoccupied by personal matters, nor suffering from one of those fits of indiscriminate affection for my fellow men, which are the concomitant of personal good fortune and a sanguine temperament. So I have concluded with great satisfaction that the improvement is real, and if it be suggested that the wish is father to the thought I would reply that the sire of all thought is a desire of one sort or another and is none the worse for that if the matter to be considered be regarded dispassionately.

The question arose immediately as to what I was to do about it. Were we to have a much greater number of commendations in our lists or should we raise our standard. At once it became apparent that I could not alter my own canons even if I would. The fact that to do so would have been as disappointing to the patient aspirant, who might otherwise have, at last, arrived, as the ever-retreating carrot to the ever-advancing donkey, was therefore irrelevant and I was spared the difficult decision. In any case our best is excellent and our second best hardly less so. Our "Commendeds" even will stand comparison, quite happily, with most of the work which is published to-day. But for heaven's sake let us make the improvement permanent and not forget that what are often called poems nowadays are all too seldom poetry, and the term poet, so freely bandied about, is as empty a title as most.

But what of the faults, which I should be sorry to suggest were absent, even if they were less obstinately pervasive than usual. These were very much what they were, and in the main gave the same impression of unnecessary defeat. Breaks in rhythm, want of internal balance, poor rhymes, lost clarity, all spoke of the refusal to make that last brave effort which would have conquered, or (and this may be the reason for the laziness) of a taste too easily contented. But a poet should never be content, indeed, is never so, for an artist is only an artist by virtue of a steady refusal to be satisfied with what he creates. There were signs, too, of word-fascination, traces of a search for well-dressed, imposing words, in monocles and spats and, here and there one even met whole phrases, shinily impressive, which as effectually baffled the mind as a mal-adjusted motor car headlight defeats the sight. Self-conscious language is out of place in poetry and fine words mere gilt on the gingerbread. Poetry is to be savoured emotionally and we all know what emotion rhetoric arouses in the heart. It is not a pleasant one, but is a just response to the pretension which uses it. Only emotion can play upon emotion and you must be careful then what emotion possesses you when you write, for whether it be self-satisfaction or something worthy it will not pass unheard and its echo in the mind of the reader will be as relevant as the operation of a natural law and as related as cause and effect.

The question of the intrusion of personality, in a conscious sense, and the suitability of mood, is most completely solved in that exalted moment, emotionally induced, which is called inspiration. The exaltation of that experience effectually prevents the commission of those faults of pretension or literary virtuosity which are so lacking in appeal because the poetry lover is looking always for something very different. Under that spell words become automatic, presenting themselves in their own sequence, which ignores our choice as it ignores ourselves. Then something is

written which inevitably appeals. The quality of the entries submitted this time and my own thoughts on the subject of mood and the inspiration which flows sometimes, but all too seldom, from it, prompted me to write the following sonnet, which may be of interest, not as one inspired, but as a record of remembered sensation attendant upon that, for me, remarkably rare experience. The power which it gives is beyond and apart from personal capacity and its trance-like possession cannot be invited, but can assuredly be repelled by egotism or by writing from a merely literary impulse.

The veil wears thin, not now the hand of Time
Wraps me in shadows and the lonely flesh,
A viewless dawn breaks through the ravelled mesh
And, where doubt was, faith touches the sublime.
Now words wherein unheard carillons chime
Fall like a manna to my need, dew-fresh,
From that high place where the immortals thresh
The grain of truth whose leavening is crime.

My pen is dipped now not in ink, but flows
For timeless moments with the scent of musk,
And thought flies like the petals of a rose
Which thirsted all day long to fall at dusk;
For, all too soon, the wonted shadow grows
And I am left, empty of light, a husk.

Words are the raw material of communication and should never be misused for their incidental qualities alone. In themselves they cannot embellish, only in their conjunction with one another to enshrine a thought may they be lovely. But their beauty, even so, is a reflection from the thought they serve; and if by some unusualness, some want of relevance, or because they have an air of demonstrating the culture of their user, they blur the thought, they are bad words and usurpers in a realm where their proper function is to efface themselves in a compelling team-work.

The award of the Premium goes, this time, to Mr. T. E. Casson, of Pennington, Yorks., but I will confess that I was troubled to reach so single a preference among so much good work. Not that I would cast a shadow upon my own choice, which is clear enough to me, but poetry has so many glamours that personal taste must exert its influence. To meet my difficulty, in some degree, I have adopted a compromise, which is also an innovation, by making an additional classification, which I have called, appropriately, if a little inelegantly, Runners-up, in which I have placed three names, whose entries might well rank with that of the winner, but whose appeal was less to me than Mr. Casson's lyrical poems. But let us say that the "Highly Commendeds" and after them the "Commendeds" were often not so much defeated as penalised by some small subtle thing of taste, although there were, of course, definite faults in many cases.

The names in the following lists are printed alphabetically and are not in an order indicating comparative merit:

Runners-up

W. Bartlett, Calverleigh, nr. Tiverton; Mrs. J. C. Lyth, York.
Mrs. E. M. Kelly, Maidstone;

Highly Commended

Ellode Collins, Bournemouth; W. H. D. Morgan, Redhill;
Mifanwy Haycock, Kensington; Enid M. Norman, Weston-super-Mare;
Jean Kenward, Chalfont St. Giles; Mrs. D. Paine, Hampstead;

D. F. Mace, Bournemouth ; Mrs. Humphrey Pares, Hythe ;
J. Sackville Martin, M.D., Leigh ; Juanita Peirse, Wilton Place, S.W.

COMMENDED

Catherine Blåkiston, Milford ; Diana Momber, Falmouth ;
Mrs. M. J. Deane, Swindon ; Irene H. Moody, Sherman, Brit.C. ;
Cpl. P. H. Dryden, W.A.A.F., Padgate ; Mrs. Morgan, Lansdowne Tce, W.1 ;
Geoffrey Gissing, Hampstead ; G. S. Oddy, Ryde ;
Lawrence W. Hockey, Newport ; Sidney Ridgway, Stockport ;
Mary Holliday, Cambridge ; W. T. Shorthose, Cardiff ;
Edgar Jones, Tovil, Maidstone ; Margery Smith, Nottingham ;
Noel A. Jones, Milford Haven ; Ann Thompson, Dagenham ;
Lt.-Col. Jones, Fort Douglas, Utah ; E. C. Toye, Rugely ;
Dorothy Kenrick, Brighton ; Miss M. Wardle, Manchester, 18 ;
Carla Lanyon Lanyon, Dorking ; Phyllis Dulce Warwick, Newark ;
A. F. Meadows, Cheltenham ; Miss J. E. B. Winbolt, Bromley.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1," by January 31st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired 5s. should be sent. It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author. (Entries received after the formal closing date are carried forward to the next adjudication.)

* * *

POETRY, TYPOGRAPHY AND PROSE

I may be missing something, but I cannot see why the term Typography is included in this heading. However, Mr. Craig says, *"I venture to suggest that the whole discussion of this matter has been obscured by misunderstanding about terminology. The word 'poetry' is used as if it were the equivalent of 'verse' or at any rate of 'good verse'."* When not intent on terminological accuracy the word is so used, but I would say the generally accepted meaning of the word "poetry" goes beyond that of the word "verse" ; it may well be that "good verse" should more properly be termed "poetry" ; the point of difference, I take it, depends upon the quality of the "verse." All poetry in the principal sense of the word, is verse, but all verse is not poetry.

Mr. Craig continues, *"I submit that when we say a thing is 'poetry' we should mean nothing other than that it is verbal expression that has poetic quality."* This suggestion, if acted upon, would do away with an accepted meaning of the word poetry, which has always been used to describe language in conformity with a certain technique. I am aware there is authority for using the word in the sense advocated by Mr. Craig, but it is going rather far to wish to abolish any other interpretation and one which I think may rightly be looked upon as the chief meaning and from which this more general idea is probably derived.

"We use the term poetic prose," as Mr. Craig says, "without any feeling of contradiction" ; but to speak of "prose poetry" would, unless qualified, involve, I think, a contradiction in terms : is there not a distinction between the words "poetry" and "poetic" which is important ? Mr. Craig wishes to call by the name of poetry all "verbal expression" which has poetic quality, but poetic quality, he tells us, has

"never been satisfactorily defined and perhaps it is indefinable." There can therefore be no possible standard to base judgment upon as to whether any verbal expression has or has not this quality.

On the other hand the word poetry, in the meaning I have referred to, does definitely imply a recognised standard of expression, hitherto applied to ancient and modern poetry and by common assent does bear that meaning. He asserts: "It is not, I maintain, justifiable to condemn informal expression as 'not poetry' just because it is informal or deviates from classical forms. The critic should be able to demonstrate the poetic quality or otherwise of a composition by considerations independent of form." What considerations, I ask, do apply to an indefinable quality? I think it may be justifiable to condemn informal verbal expression as "not poetry" merely on the ground of lack of form. One could wish that the use of the word "poetry" had not been strained to the extent it has and that it were definitely restricted to the writing of poems in conformity with some approved standard, the word poetic could, I think, be more appropriately used in place of it.

After all any sentiment the mind is capable of conceiving can be well and beautifully expressed in prose, but I fancy quite a few people would admit that a fine poem undone and put into prose had lost its original attractiveness. It seems that fine poetry and fine language do go together, indeed, I do not think you can have the one without the other, and one may reasonably doubt how long, in the entire absence of form, would fine poetry continue. There does appear to be opportunity afforded to language written in poetic form, to excel in chosen word and phrase which may result in that unique expression which constitutes poetry. That many find pleasure in language thus achieved and that few succeed in its attainment, cannot be doubted. In conclusion I would maintain "form" is not a mere adjunct of art, it is an essential part of it. Beauty itself is the source of law and order. The form in art does not constitute the art, it is the art itself which develops the form.

Thetford. RAYMUND BOURNE.

I have come across an instance in which Kipling seems to have been guilty of using a terminal word in a line of verse solely for the sake of the rhyme, but irrespective of the sense; and later to have corrected this at the expense of the rhyme but to preserve the sense. In the "Inclusive" Edition of his verse (Second Impression, 1927) appears the following in "Chapter Headings" from "Plain Tales from the Hills":

To-night God knows what thing shall tide,
The Earth is racked and fain—
Expectant, sleepless, open-eyed;
And we, who from the Earth were made
Thrill with our Mother's pain

The word "fain" so mystified me that I checked it against my copy of *Plain Tales from the Hills* (Pocket Edition, 1931). Here "fain" has been amended to "faint," which is intelligible and in keeping with the sense, but which does not rhyme with "pain" in line five.

Here is the honest Kipling, who no doubt preferred to correct a literary lapse and sacrifice a rhyme rather than perpetuate an obscure word. This seems to me to be typical of his aim that above all else his meaning should be plain to the man in the street. A lesser man might have been tempted to let well alone hoping to "get away with it."

Lieut.-Colonel, Beaminster, Dorset. E. A. PENNY.

TO THE EDITOR.

CONTEMPORARY *v.* MODERN

I should like, within the limits of a letter, to defend my anthology against the rather severe attack on it made in this REVIEW.

First of all, I submit that whether we like it or not, there is a widespread acceptance—and I do not mean by ignorant people, but by critics of considerable authority and by poets themselves—of a distinction between contemporary poetry and modern. For instance, two of the best known anthologies published in recent years are Michael Roberts's *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* and Anne Ridler's *A Little Book of Modern Verse*, in neither of which are such famous contemporary poets as Edmund Blunden and Walter de la Mare represented. Again, so distinguished a body as the Book Society advertises the three poets of its selection committee, Blunden, Sylvia Lynd and C. Day Lewis, by calling the first two "poets" and only Day Lewis a "modern poet."

What we have to decide, therefore, is this: is the distinction valid? is this common belief only a superstition or is it a serious intellectual tenet?

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "contemporary" as "belonging to the same time, equal in age," and "modern" as "of the present and recent times, new-fashioned." The two words are not synonymous even in popular, general usage.

The modern poet is either still alive or recently dead, but the contemporary poet is always alive at the same time as those with whom he is contemporary. In the simple context of time the contemporary poet may not be modern nor the modern poet contemporary. Sidney Keyes was and still is a modern poet, but he is no longer contemporary with any one.

But the dictionary gives another definition of "modern" than the chronological—"new-fashioned," and it is the use of the word in this sense with which we are mainly concerned, for herein lies the answer to our questions.

For that which is modern follows a new fashion, is in a new style. Somewhere a novel idea originates and comes to the notice of other people. They are attracted by it, perhaps not always for the same reason, and imitate it: it becomes "all the rage" until somewhere else another new idea is formed and that which was new is either forgotten or becomes traditional. But not every one follows the new fashion when it is new, nor are those who remain aloof from it in the wrong, for a new fashion is not necessarily good or important.

This procession of novelties, this phenomenon of change, of revolt sometimes, of a desire to be different or to find a method of expressing what has not yet been expressed, is seen no less in art, in literature, than in clothes or motor cars. Consider only how in French poetry the period of traditional romanticism was succeeded by the age of the Parnassians, that in its turn by the Symbolist movement, and that by Dadaism. Consider only the departure from the normal made by James Joyce in "Ulysses."

But the essential purposes of art and clothes remain constant, at least so far as we can judge them within measurable time. One man wears a toga to cover his nakedness, another a siren-suit, and Winston Churchill, the man, the personality, is as inconceivable dressed in a toga as Julius Caesar dressed in a siren-suit. So one poet may express his attitude to death in the Petrarchan sonnet and the Elizabethan idiom, another in free verse and in the psychoanalytical idiom of the post-Freudian era: but the same critical approach has to be made to both: the value of each poem, considered as a single whole, manner and matter, is to be judged by its success.

This analogy between poetry and clothes, while facile, serves to make the point that modernity is a matter of fashion, manner, style, at once a medium and an approach, a state of mind. Many contemporary people wear old-fashioned clothes; many contemporary poets write in an old-fashioned manner.

What, then, is this new fashion of poetic writing which is modern ? Fully to answer the question one would have to write at least a book, and books have been written about the subject, as I remind the readers of the preface to my anthology. There is Day Lewis's *A Hope for Poetry,* for example.

For it is a very big and complex subject which cannot be discussed in a few words. If we wish to understand it we must be prepared to spend a long time studying it : there are too many short-winded pamphleteers about to-day, and heaven alone knows how they succeed in getting their seemingly erudite articles published.

In fact, the journey towards an exact analysis and explanation of poetic modernity is so long and tortuous that even so eminent a critic and poet as T. S. Eliot has decided that it is not worth while. In his preface to Anne Ridler's *Little Book* he writes :

> ". . . the definition of "modern poetry" cannot be made more than partially by the intelligence . . . For an explanation of what makes modern poetry would have to be an explanation of the whole modern world ; to understand the poet we should have to understand ourselves, we should have, in fact, to reach a degree of self-consciousness of which mankind has never been capable, and of which, if attained, it might perish."

I agree with Eliot, as I do with Housman. that the truth of any poetry is apprehended emotionally and not intellectually, and it is enough for oneself to know this : the trouble comes when one has to explain to someone else why one set of verses is poetry and another is not.

So it will not satisfy your readers if I merely quote Eliot and say that I agree with him that one either "feels in one's bones" the modernity of a poem or does not. Nor have I space to develop the many themes which are involved in a scientific analysis of the subject : literary fashions and style in general, how one succeeds another and why ; the various phases of poetry writing in this century ; the psychological, political and moral influences at work in modern European civilisation ; the changes in the poet's conception of his function, especially in its social implications and the public's attitude to him ; changes in idiom, versification and rhyme ; the influence of individual poets like Whitman, Hopkins, Rimbaud, Rilke and Eliot.

I must therefore take a middle course between shelving the problem as impossible and embarking on an essay of whose end I could not be certain. I shall quote one poem by Edmund Blunden, the "poet," and one by C. Day Lewis, the "modern poet," which clearly demonstrate (at least to me) why only one of two contemporary poets can be called modern.

The poem by Blunden is entitled "God's Time" and was printed in *The Times Literary Supplement* of December 25th last :

A gentler heaven steals over the hour,
  And at its pace I go,
  And scan green things that grow
Beneath old hedge and ivy-bower ;
Most gracious falls the silent hour.

Through the shut sky an eye of blue
  Twinkles upon the soul,
  Even as these weeds unroll
Their pretty leafage choice and new ;
Their greenness blesses, and that blue.

The round leaf, shield leaf, patterned spray
  All shine like love's first tears,

And though no primrose peers,
Nor aconites nor windflowers play,
I have their message through leaf and spray.

This may not be the hour I supposed
When from the house I came
Informed of a world aflame;
That will have been an era closed,
Though endless as I then supposed.

O green leaves born in winter's heart,
White ghosts of flowers to be,
Come here so quietly,
And blossoming heaven's blue counterpart—
I have lost my way, and found my heart.

Day Lewis's is the second of the sequence of nine sonnets printed in *Word Over All:*

Children look down upon the morning-grey
Tissue of mist that veils a valley's lap:
Their fingers itch to tear it and unwrap
The flags, the roundabouts, the gala day.
They watch the spring rise inexhaustibly—
A breathing thread out of the eddied sand,
Sufficient to their day: but half their mind
Is on the sailed and glittering estuary.
Fondly we wish their mist might never break,
Knowing it hides so much that best were hidden:
We'd chain them by the spring, lest it should broaden
For them into a quicksand and a wreck.
But they slip through our fingers like the source,
Like mist, like time that has flagged out their course.

A poet's medium of expression is words, singly and in image-groups, in the form of verse, and we know and judge him by these. The vocabulary and imagery, the style, what the dictionary calls "the collective characteristics of the writing," of this sonnet, as of all Lewis's poetry, are modern; those of Blunden's poem are not. And the difference in verbal music is easily heard if the two poems are read aloud one after the other.

For the sonnet belongs in style to the new fashion of poetic expression which has been created by the new forces motivating new mental and emotional actions and reactions in some, but not all, contemporary and recently dead poets. W. H. Davies did not write in this style or think in this way and he was not a modern poet; Alun Lewis did so think and write and he still is modern.

Lines 11 and 12 of the sonnet, for instance, express in the modern manner—austere, direct, free from all vestige of traditional poetic vocabulary and harmony, evoking a new appeal emotionally and intellectually—the chronic pessimism of the modern world as it is apprehended by a sensitive man. The lines express modern thought in an inseparable modern style.

But there is nothing in Blunden's poem in the same key. The vocabulary, the imagery, the rhythm, the whole style are different and one knows them for older, quieter, gentler like the heaven of the first line. Take the last line of the first stanza: "Most gracious falls the silent hour"—such a line, recognisably traditional in music and meaning, could not have been written by a modern poet because the self which

he has to express does not include such music or such thought. No more could he have written: "Their pretty leafage choice and new," for the adjective "pretty" is not in the modern wordlist: it has lost all meaning in the modern world. The poet of this world is a different kind of poet, that is what it amounts to, and has to be judged on the basis of the nature of his difference. In 1610 Donne was a modern poet, but Shakespeare and Ben Jonson were not. The manner and matter of his love-poetry are as different from those of the traditional Elizabethan and Jacobean as Lewis's sonnet is from "God's Time." The two famous lines from "The Extasie," for example:

Our eye-beams twisted, and did thred
Our eyes, upon one double string,

have something very different to say and say it in a very different manner from this typically Elizabethan stanza by Campion:

There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies grow;
A heavenly paradise in that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow.
There cherries grow which none can buy,
Till "Cherry-ripe" themselves do cry.

Like Eliot, Donne became the leader of a new fashion in thinking and writing, and for a while the "metaphysical wits" were the modern poets (each age invents its labels for convenience sake), while many of their contemporaries—Herrick, for instance—followed the older manner. So Marvell was a modern poet, but Suckling was not, and to-day Auden is a modern poet, but James Stephens is not.

If it is not already clear, I must now make it so: that the relative goodness of contemporary and modern poetry is not my concern here. A poem is not good because it is either modern or not modern. Michael Roberts is careful to point out in his preface to *The Faber Book* that his selection "is not intended to be a comprehensive anthology of the best poems of our age," but is a representative collection of the best modern poetry. Similarly, the exclusion of such poets as Blunden, De la Mare, Robert Nichols and Masefield from my anthology does not mean that I think them less good poets than Spender, Auden and Gascoyne. On the contrary, I believe that all four are pre-eminent poets of this century.

My anthology, as I try to explain in a short preface which was written so as to be easily intelligible by the senior schoolchild as well as by adults, has the single aim of proving by examples that the common accusation made by critics that modern poetry as a whole is unintelligible, is nonsense. I seek to introduce the modern poet—MacNeice, Lehmann, Roy Fuller—to the senior schoolchild and interested adult in such a way that they will realise that this accusation is nonsense when they meet it, as meet it they must sooner or later, and will be able to recognise genuine poetry, even when it is modern. There are as many poetasters to-day as there were yesterday and will be to-morrow, but we ought not to wish the true poet to be judged in common with them. The glib anti-modernist critic of the MacCarthy school is doing no less harm to poetry now than his predecessors have done in all periods. Your reviewer suggests that there is no such person, but there is. Listen to Adam Fox in the Spring, 1943, number of *English*:

> "... the Moderns, of whom Mr. Eliot is the leader and main inspiration, are in process of being abandoned even by serious readers of poetry as too unintelligible and only faintly pleasurable."

Was there ever a sillier statement or a graver insult to the serious reader of poetry?

was there ever a more unscholarly generalisation ? Yet it occurs in the journal of that association whose main purpose, I take it, is to foster a love of and serious respect for literature.

Or listen to an anon mous writer in the *Observer* of June 11th speaking about Gerard Manley Hopkins :

> ". . . the fact that the meaning was sometimes lost in this mosaic (of words) makes him first favourite with those who, in the modern mode, think no poet tolerable who succeeds in being intelligible."

But let us not quarrel. Poetry is bigger than poets and fashions. Finally, there is only one important consideration. X writes verse, never mind in what form or about what. Perhaps he is modern. Perhaps he calls himself, or is called by others, a traditionalist, or a symbolist, an imagist, a Georgian, a romantic, a surrealist, a Dadaist, an anything—it may be of technical significance. But what is finally alone in importance is : is he a poet ?

Windsor, June 2nd, 1944. W. G. Bebbington.

THE POET AS LEADER

"The Poet and the New Era" brought me several sharp raps over the knuckles, some of which, no doubt, I deserved. At the same time, it pleased quite a number of people who have asked me to develop the idea of the poets' work in the new era. They tell me not to generalise so much, but get down to brass tacks and say what the poet can do.

One correspondent from Jamaica Plains, Mass., says "I am putting the creature before the creator." Personally, I never think of a poet as a creature, and as to the creator, well, who knows ? It has been said that Massachusetts is one of the few places left on earth where the Higher Criticism has not yet penetrated.

I have been very greatly surprised by the number of people who have told me that "the poet is not a politician and he must not touch politics . . . the poet must only write about beautiful things that mirror happiness." Was Shakespeare, then, not a poet when he wrote King Lear ? This magnificent poem does not deal with beautiful things at all and it certainly does not mirror happiness.

One of the silliest things I ever read was the following : "The poet, if he is performing his true duties, is too happy in his own happiness to bother about these things." What a man to know ! I should describe this state of mind as the quintessence of conceited egotism.

I take it that a poet is a thinking man, and a thinking man is very rarely a happy man. Also the poet should possess the critical faculty and this does not make for happiness. The only man I ever knew to be thoroughly happy in his work was a trap drummer in a jazz orchestra, and he had a depressed cranium and a receding chin.

We have the official critic of The Poetry Review telling us that : "Poetry itself is only the product of a flair for words and an emotional temperament which feels things a little more deeply than common." Now that we know what poetry is and what the poet must do, and must not do, we can proceed with the consideration of his place as leader in the new era.

At this point I crave a digression which bears very heavily on this subject. Lovers of poetry, the world over, owe a deep debt of gratitude to Lord Wavell for his anthology *Other Men's Flowers*. Although many people do not love all the poets that Lord Wavell remembers so well, and although all anthologies are open to criticism, I have only one complaint. This is that he did not include more of his own work. Apart

from the beautiful little poem, about which he is so modest, he is a poet, and it is a denial to the world for him to keep his work hidden from view. It is useless for him to say he has no Opus numbers. He must have, and we ought to be allowed to share his vision.

There is a passage in this anthology which ought to be memorised by every one writing English verse. I quote a part of it as follows :

> "There are few modern poems here—by modern I mean the betwixt-wars poets, 1919-1939, years that are better forgotten in the history of our people . . . worse still, modern poetry seems to me to lack the essential quality of courage, of a gallant outlook on the pains and pleasures of this world through which we have to pass ; where we—the rank and file—want leadership and encouragement from those gifted with power over words, not defeatism and depression. A poet is a man to whom vision is given beyond his fellows. Of what use is that vision if he expresses it in words unintelligible to all but a small circle and doubtfully to them ?"

What splendid sanity is here, what bravery and what honesty. It is like the strong west wind meeting one after three hours in a crowded and badly-ventilated theatre.

The point is that Lord Wavell wants leadership from the poet, because the poet is a man of vision. If a great and distinguished man and poet asks for the poet's lead, how much more necessary is it for the mass of the people.

Another very great man, Field-Marshal Smuts, gave a demonstration of vision recently, when he addressed the Empire Parliamentary Association. The English-speaking world was shocked at the words "France has gone." It preferred to hear something untrue, as always. It professed to be hurt about the phase describing the position of France, but in reality its vanity was injured more when it was told that the British Empire was not up to much after all. The difference between the Field-Marshal and his hearers was the difference between the seer and the tradesman. There is a similar difference between the poet and politician. Just as the Field-Marshal, as seer, gave the politicians something fresh to think about, so can the poet give new direction to the routine mind of the herd that gathers at Westminster.

The Field-Marshal's vision carries him beyond frontiers and immediate power politics. He looks at the whole world and sees the nations of Europe as small groups of fractious men, scrambling for petty advantages over each other. To the professional politician these wars and feuds and intrigues are great affairs. To the seer, like the great Smuts, and to the poet, they are all infinitely small fragments of futility. They are the errors of pigmies, not men, and they belong to the world of chaos where all roads lead to pandemonium.

Only the seers and the poets have vision, and they see a whole country as the average man sees his own part of a parish, where he just exists for a time and then dies "without leaving a trace."

If our young poets, with this essential equipment of vision, would produce poems that really said something worth saying, they would spread vision among the people where no such thing has existed before. If they wish to know what to write about, they can surely see many subjects and themes to their hands. They are everywhere around them.

It has been stated many times that politics is not the poet's business. To this I reply that it is the poet's business most emphatically. Whatever vitally affects the life of man is the poet's business. At very many points in the life of a man he is affected by politics. Therefore, at these points, the poet must be interested, and if he

is a thinking and feeling man he must desire to take a hand. He must forget that stupid slogan, "no politics and no religion."

A man once said to me, "I could do with your poetry, Senior, but you always drag in politics, even when you are discussing religion." I was not offended because I really don't see how it can be kept out of any discussion. However much we may sneer at the House of Commons, we have to admit that it affects us all in some degree. Whatever is done there, however slowly, makes eventually some mark upon all our lives. That it should never become an instrument of national evil is surely a matter in which the poet can take an excited interest. It must be remembered that the House of Commons does not lead; it is driven, by clamour, when it passes beneficial acts. It is the poet's duty and pleasure to drive it faster and along paths which the popular clamour knows nothing of.

It is granted that the poet must have vision. He must also be a sensitive. As he must be drawn toward beauty always, so he must be revolted by ugliness. But he must not shrink from it. He must fight it. That is why Lord Wavell's plea for courage and gallantry is so just.

When Byron made his speech in the House of Lords on the Nottingham Frame-Breakers Bill he behaved with great gallantry. And nobody will deny poetry to Byron surely. But I forget. Byron is not a poet at all by the 1919-1939 standards. That is why these years should be forgotten.

As the poet must fight ugliness he must take a hand in politics, because the political weapon is the only one that can change the nation's direction. A former President of The Poetry Society, at one time an aggressive M.P., has already dealt with poetry and politics in this REVIEW, and a Vice-President, Sir Arnold Wilson, actively contributed to the same association.

We say the workhouse system has been replaced by the Public Assistance Committee. It has, in name only. When we abolish the "Means" Test in response to popular demand we produce the same ugly mean thing and call it a "Needs" Test. It is one of the things that the poet will have to fight.

Sir William Beveridge, speaking at Oxford on 29th November, 1943, said, "Eighty per cent. of our private wealth is held by seven per cent. of the people." This is most emphatically an ugly thing and must be fought against. There are scores of ugly things in our national life that we take for granted because none of the political parties apply the test of beauty to anything. It is to rectify this that our poets are needed.

The main point under discussion, however, is the poet as leader in the new world which is surely being shaped now. It seems fairly clear that in the new grouping of the nations the poet and man of vision can see something tremendous happening which the politician will not see till he is smothered under its avalanche. For this reason, the poet should have a hand in world politics, to lead the people along the new paths which he sees and they certainly do not see.

Mr. Podsnap once said he knew what Russia wanted and the present English attitude of mind towards Russia has not much changed since Mr. Podsnap waved the whole question behind him. It may have changed even for the worse as the American dollar has come into its own since Mr. Podsnap's day. Still the fact remains, that by a miraculous display of all the virtues contained in the word valour, Russia has made one magnificent stride into the west, where she will dominate the situation for a long time to come.

Along with valour, she has brought ideas. These are not new ideas and they are not Russian ideas; they are very old ideas, as old as the early Christians. John

Huss held them and the great Masaryk built his wonderful republic of Czecho-Slovakia on them. The Moravian Church put them into practice in England, successfully, for a hundred years. Milton held them very strongly as his "Treatise on a Free Commonwealth" shows.

The other giant in the modern political world is the U.S.A.—a country big in everything but ideas. Interests have taken the place of ideas. Export trade is a fetish with her and she even exports the most unpleasant freak religions. She has produced a few great men, but almost all of these have been disavowed because they had ideas. Abraham Lincoln never saw ahead of him a nation that would create a new first Beatitude, "Blessed is he that hath interest on capital." In short, when we think of the U.S.A. we think of big business only and nothing else.

Mr. Henry Wallace, Vice-President of the U.S.A., said on 4th February, 1944: "Big business puts Wall Street before the nation, property rights before human rights, and will fight with unrelenting hatred, by Press, radio, demagogy and lobbying against any State or Government that puts human rights before property rights." As a rider to this, we might say that the City of London would to the same thing. It is clear, therefore, that there can be nothing in common, either economically or socially, between the U.S.A. and Russia.

The position of Great Britain is that of balance weight in the international see-saw. It will be her duty to keep ideas at one end and interests at the other. With the British genius for compromise she will be split from top to bottom and we shall have to take sides. It is for the British people to say whether they prefer ideas or interests. In the course of years our poets can help the people to decide this major issue.

At this point I can hear our young poets crying out "What has all this to do with poetry?" This also is simple to answer. All poets should be able to write prose, and good prose. Why should not our young poets give their poetry a rest for a period and take a hand in the great clash of ideas that is approaching. Would it not be better and more manly to write prose essays on the new map of life that is being drawn for all the world, than to indulge in an orgy of literary crooning, for this is what much of modern poetry is?

Surely it is far finer work to write noble prose that is interesting and easy to understand, than to compose dirges that can only interest undertakers and are not intended to be understood by anybody.

Milton postponed the writing of *Paradise Lost* for twenty years in order to demonstrate in prose the sovereignty of the people. This work cost him his loss of sight and he knew it would, but he held on to his noble purpose. At one period of his life, Richard Wagner said that politics came before music. But these were great men and they had vision above their fellows.

Those of us who can remember the Irish members in the House of Commons, know what a small handful of men can do in a large assembly if they have the gift and the will. There were only eighty Irish members in a House of six hundred and seventy, but whenever they chose they suspended all business until they received attention. It is not suggested that our poets could do what the Irish members did, but they could do much. If there were twenty poets in the House of Commons, gifted with vision and the burning enthusiasm which is part of a poet's equipment, they could lead in time. Of course, the poets would have to enter the House disguised under one or other of the party labels. There would have to be a great many more Education Acts passed before the British elector would vote for a poet to represent him. This subject is not discussed in that delectable classic *The Life and Duties of a Citizen*.

There is one other matter about which the poet could instruct the public, the position of China as a great power. There are to be no more spheres of influence, no more international settlements, no more treaty ports. China has to have complete and absolute sovereignty and no interference of any kind from the west. In fact, the west has suddenly and unaccountably gone all moral on the subject of China. It has been decided to obliterate all trace of the Opium War from our school class-books. It has been secretly agreed by all the great allied powers that the word "Concession" shall not be whispered even, in either the English or American language. Now that China is to be regarded as one of the four Great World Powers, our missionaries there may be considered as an insult. In other walks of life it is quite fashionable to exchange views between country and country. These are called exploratory talks. Why should we not exchange missionaries with China. They could explore such corners of our civilisation as Ancoats in Manchester and Bethnal Green in London. They would then perhaps understand how difficult it is to make the British nation comprehend one of China's famous proverbs: "If you have two loaves, sell one and buy a lily." This is too difficult a task for our own present poets; they are not good enough.

Slough, April 24th, 1944. H. L. Senior.

IN DEFENCE OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

I hope I am not too late to contradict some ideas concerning Gerard Manley Hopkins, recently expressed by Mr. H. W. Harding, and the errors would seem to be these: (1) That a poet cannot become a priest without losing his mental balance. Why not? This implies that celibacy is impossible if a creative person is to realise his gifts. From the point of view of logic, a departure from celibacy would provide a release for some of his creative powers, leaving less to lavish on his work. From the point of view of the subject's mental balance, only a starving of the soul of love, its staple food, could throw the mind from its agate point, and the religious life, breaking down as it does all earthly barriers between soul and God, must by its nature be sufficient. Would St. Francis have been a greater poet had he kept a harem? or St. John of the Cross? I think not. (2) His (it seems to me) insensitive criticisms of Hopkins' language. He singles out for adverse comment the magnificent line: "Didst fettle for the great grey drayhorse his bright and battering sandal." "Bright," says Mr. Harding, "is inaccurate." Why? In the literal sense purely, a horseshoe is bright. "And sandal" (here is the astonishing statement) "merely rhymes with Randell." Merely! Why, stylistically it is the key word of the line—as "dazzling" in the phrase "a deep and dazzling darkness" or "deviates" in the line "But Shadwell never deviates into sense." "Sandal" in the line of Hopkins' is the only word possible, bringing with it the vision of Mercury and Perseus, and the noise of wings. "Bright and battering boot" on the other hand would bring merely the vision, the unlovely, the fend-from-us-heaven vision of a hoarse square-bashing sergeant-major. (Yet "bright" in that phrase, would be villainously "accurate.")

No, I fervently believe Mr. Harding to be utterly wrong, and if it is really the first time he has looked into Gerard Manley Hopkins I implore him to look again. I like to think of the Jesuit as the El Greco of literature, and as great a genius.

Captain, R.A., May 20th. Joseph Gerard O'Connor.

Our contributor replies: I read Mr. O'Connor's letter with interest and with very little dissent. His views indeed conflict but slightly with mine for I did not suggest that celibacy had unhinged Hopkins' mind, but only that it had so intensified his creative urge that he was unable adequately to control his utterance. So it would

appear that Capt. O'Connor and I are substantially in agreement that celibacy increased Hopkins' creative power and conversely that a departure from that state would have reduced it just as the possession of a harem would not have improved the poetry of St. Francis.

I am sorry to see it suggested that my criticisms are insensitive. Opinions may differ surely without personalities. The celebrated line "bright and battering sandal" is in my view one of those lucky events which every poet using rhyme has occasion to be grateful for. "Randall" so obviously produced the "Sandal" that one must be insensitive indeed to suppose otherwise. Where I have been, perhaps pardonably, misunderstood is in being thought to dislike this line. On the contrary it is magnificent, but only as itself. As the creation of Hopkins it becomes factually inaccurate with the adjective "bright," and the crowning felicity "sandal" was handed to him. I should be ready to eat my words, of course, if I could be assured that Felix Randall was not the name of the Smith that died, but a fabrication for the long-range purpose of permitting the use of the word sandal.

I am not yet repentant of my temerity in writing this small criticism of an extremely interesting poet. It is my nature, when confronted by the unusual, to seek for some explanation which might account for the phenomenon. Having found one which seems plausible I do not claim for it a papal infallibility, but advance it with a qualifying acknowledgment of its origin and a deprecating admission that it was an opinion formed upon a first acquaintance. I have not yet felt it to be necessary to reverse that opinion in the light of further contact with his work.

IN DEFENCE OF SURREALISM

As a new reader of THE POETRY REVIEW I would like to express my surprise in reading, amongst so much splendid work both in poetry and prose, the very unfair attacks made upon the surrealist movement in recent issues. These have been especially apparent in the controversy over the poetry of A. V. Bowen and J. F. Hendry. I myself have the deepest admiration for the poems of Mr. A. V. Bowen and I agree with everything your reviewer has said about their merits. At the same time I cannot but agree with Mr. Moore that it is unjust both to Mr. Hendry and to the surrealist school to ascribe the work of the latter poet to that school. No poem I have ever seen that was written by Hendry has touched upon surrealism save in the most superficial way. But that is not quite the point.

The truth is it just will not do to dismiss surrealism as incomprehensible and outmoded without giving one sound reason for these contentions. If a criticism is to be of real value it appears to me that the critic must be able to distinguish not only between particular schools of poetry, but between particular poets of the same school.

I have not the slightest doubt that the surrealist movement has produced as many pretentious windbags and irresponsible "hangers-on" as any other literary movement of equal importance. To dismiss the work of all surrealist poets as incomprehensible would be a great injustice to the genuine artists who have drawn true inspiration from the movement.

In England the stream of surrealism has been neither a wide one nor a deep one. We can all agree that the public neglect of this movement in our country has been largely due to the fact that we have had no poet big enough, in every sense of the word, to fully exploit the resources of the surrealist movement. In spite of this, however, David Gascoyne uses surrealism beautifully in some of his poems, and Francis Scarfe (though far from being a pure surrealist) has been beneficially influenced by the surrealist writers.

But in France the story is indeed a different one. Anyone seeking the true value of surrealism can find ample evidence in the work of the great contemporary poets of France. Three names immediately spring to mind, the first two true members of the surrealist movement, and the last much influenced by it. These men, Paul Eluard, Aragon and Claude Roy, will lose nothing by comparison with the very foremost of our own contemporary writers, regardless of schools or movements. Their work, by its absolute clarity, dignity and spontaneity, places them in the first rank of present-day poets, and as long as this living proof of genius and inspiration exists the surrealist movement cannot be dismissed as either negligible or incomprehensible.

Mytholmroyd, July 10th. ALEC SMITH.

CONGRATULATIONS FROM BARBADOS

May I send a few lines to congratulate those who direct the activities of The Poetry Society on the progress they have made and are making, especially THE POETRY REVIEW. Not only is the poetry better, but there is more direct and indirect relation to the times we live in. I might select where the ties are more obvious, but I prefer to make my point, where many would not look for any connection, in some beautiful and intangible lines by Barbara Bingley (THE POETRY REVIEW, Sept.-Dec., 1943), as for instance the middle stanzas with its sense of trees grieving for our tragic mysteries. I happened to be reading it again on the same day as a letter from a gunner, Captain Beric Williams, "On the road to Rome (*Daily Telegraph,* Dec. 4th, 1943), in which, in his vivid prose he describes, among much else that he makes most stimulating to the imagination, the beauty of the poplars, and then he adds, "Their beauty, however, is ebbing fast; all day their leaves float down in a steady, unhurried shower. There is something faintly sad about it, something more than the eternal recurring melancholy of autumn; it is almost as if they were weeping for the wretched-wretchedness of Italy": CARLYON BELLAIRS (ex-President of The Poetry Society), St. James, Barbados, March 21st, 1944.

A. E. HOUSMAN AND TRANSIENCE

The disciples of A. E. Housman are many and it is almost certain that by now a deluge of protest has descended upon you concerning the near sacrilege of Mr. William Wolff ("The Poet and Transience," POETRY REVIEW, May-June) in mis-interpreting their master. I write only because these are improbable days and some curious combinations of mischance might leave the error uncorrected.

It is no more than fair comment to say that when Mr. Wolff quotes the last verse of "'Tis time, I think, by Wenlock town"—"A Shropshire Lad" (No. 39)—as an example of the poet's preoccupation with the transience of life, it is a saddening indication that he (Mr. Wolff) is not thoroughly conversant either with "A Shropshire Lad" or with the life of its author. I recommend him to read *A.E.H.,* a biography, by Laurence Housman. The lines quoted:

> Oh tarnish late on Wenlock Edge,
> Gold that I never see;
> Lie long, high snowdrifts in the hedge
> That will not shower on me

are simply nostalgic—that, and nothing more. The author of "A Shropshire Lad" was not a man of leisure and found it necessary, early in life, to accept employment away from the county he loved so well. That he regretted the enforced absence there can be no doubt, as the following references to the book will show:

No. 37 : . . . . . .
You and I must keep from shame
In London streets the Shropshire name.
On banks of Thames they must not say
Severn breeds worse men than they ;
And friends abroad must bear in mind
Friends at home they leave behind.

No. 38 : The winds out of the west land blow,
My friends have breathed them there ;
Warm with the blood of lads I know
Comes east the sighing air.
. . . . . .

No. 41 : In my own shire, if I was sad,
Homely comforters I had :
The earth, because my heart was sore.
Sorrowed for the son she bore ;
. . . . . .
But here in London streets I ken
No such helpmates, only men ;
And these are not in plight to bear,
If they would, another's care.
. . . . . .

No. 52 : Far in a western brookland
That bred me long ago
The poplars stand and tremble
By pools I used to know.
. . . . . .
Here I lie down in London
And turn to rest alone.

There, by the starlit fences,
The wanderer halts and hears
My soul that lingers sighing
About the glimmering weirs.

No. 55 : . . . . . .
Now that other lads than I
Strip to bathe on Severn shore,
. . . . . .

and there are others.

In a way, I sympathise with Mr. Wolff. It was bad luck in selection for, in racing parlance, it was at least a 100 to 8 chance against his choosing a passage from *A Shropshire Lad* that would *not* illustrate the point he was trying to make.

The poems are full of opposite lines ; yet perhaps the best example of all is to be found in Housman's *Last Poems :*

No. 10 : Could man be drunk for ever
With liquor, love, or fights,
Lief should I rouse at morning
And lief lie down of nights.

But men at whiles are sober
And think by fits and starts
And if they think, they fasten
Their hands upon their hearts.

This little poem radiates, by sheer implication, the haunting awareness of the transience of life that your contributor wished to exemplify.

In closing, may I mention another matter? I observe with sorrow that an unmistakable Victorian venom has crept lately into many of your readers' letters. There is a limit beyond which recriminatory correspondence (in which poets join) on the subject of poetry seems to lessen the stature, not only of the participants, but of poets in general. In your recent issues (the storm-centre of which is Mr. Nicholas Moore), this mark, I submit, has been clearly overstepped.

L.A.C., R.A.F. R. P. Brett.

THE SYMBOLISM OF "THE ANCIENT MARINER"

I have read with much interest Mr. Howard Parsons' interpretation of *The Ancient Mariner,* but I feel that he has disregarded the symbolism.

Symbolism is a universal language and, if correctly used, does not have one meaning in one place and another elsewhere. The white bird, whether it be a dove, an albatross, or a swan, always signifies the Holy Spirit, and when it is destroyed, whether by Parsifal or by the Mariner, Cupid's wanton, misdirected arrows are usually the weapon.

Having thus lost the object of his contemplation, the would-be mystic must endure *a weary time, a weary time.* All the mystics have deplored their seasons of dryness in prayer—*through utter drought all dumb we stood; my heart as dry as dust,* and it should be a sobering thought for Christians that the Mariner's loss of contact with Reality condemns him *and all his shipmates* to what Lord Wavell describes as Life-in-Death.

The return of the Presence accounts for the Mariner's changed attitude towards the creatures of the calm. It returned *as a roaring wind*—the *mighty rushing wind* of Pentecost. The Mariner's trance is consistent with this interpretation.

It only remains to declare that the wedding feast is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb; to confirm this, the Bride is described in the symbolism of the Song of Solomon—*red as a rose is she*—the Rose of Sharon, the Rose of Omar Khayyam.

H.M.S. *Rodney,* June 14th. Greswolde Davis.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A HOAX

We demand of any prose writer that he has something to say and the ability to say it plainly. We demand of a poet that he has something to sing and the gift of singing clearly out of genuine impulse or inspiration. His name doesn't matter. We are impressed by no god of tin and tinsel nodding away like a noodle. The verbal antics of men produced by humbug out of that woeful mare vanity don't persuade us that a poet is born. Let us have no dishonesty in writers, or readers, or critics. When we don't understand, let us say we don't understand, or that we believe nothing is there for understanding. If we do understand, but see it as a thing we hate, being evil, let us attack the evil and, if possible, kill it. Above all, let us never, never, never assist the circulation of second-hand opinions.

Simple honesty is the only way. There's nothing, nothing at all, which we *ought* to like; no label which it is our *duty* to wear. Surely to goodness in these days of the flying bomb and brutal violence, of open wickedness in all its forms, there's no time or place for posing nor any unreality. We need the deep comfort of unquestionable beauty and the joy of vision and spiritual power: the poetry of reality, which is Heaven, not the poetry of unreality, the place, or state, which is Hell, where the Lord and Giver of Life is not worshipped and adored.

The intelligentsia of Adelaide, forgetting the truth in these, what they would call platitudes, have hailed a certain "Ern Malley" as one of the two giants of con-

temporary Australian poetry. Thirty pages of *Angry Penguins*, a modern literary review, have been devoted to a laudatory notice of Ern Mallev's poems and explaining the depth of their inner meanings for, without such assistance, I gather, no one could see any meanings whatever. An Adelaide literary lecturer acclaimed the work as brilliant and omitted to reveal the fact that it is as clear as mud—quite incomprehensible. The real writers of the poems have now *blown the gaff, spilled the beans* and *given the show away*. They have confessed to their authorship. There is no Ern Mallev and never was. The stuff, very spoof of very spoof, was concocted by two soldiers, a Corporal and a Lieutenant, "to test critical discrimination" or, in other words, to prick the balloon. With this effort the whole thing *goes bust* and the intelligentsia of Adelaide are left looking intently at their own feet instead of walking with their noses in the air.

The sportive soldiers made the "poems" out of reference books opened at random, choosing words and phrases haphazard. Their rule of composition was that "there must be no coherent theme, only confused inconsistent hints at meaning held out as a bait to the reader" and the reader was fooled to the top of his bent.

And even since the hoax came to light diehard admirers of "Ern Mallev" have been writing to the papers saying that they like the poems and refusing to admit that they have been having their legs pulled. "Let us be superior to the others without effort." That's what the willing dupes are saying now. "We have a sixth sense, a special intelligence; we comprehend the incomprehensible and find wisdom in what is manifestly absurd." Puck was right: "What fools these mortals be!"

The Poetry Society stands for vision and beauty and the great tradition. We don't set our faces against honest experiment, neither do we object to any single-minded exploration of the resources of language. We believe in a stream of English poetry and in that army of makers, of mighty poets, whose songs, taken to the general heart, would have made our present troubles impossible. So we applaud the "Ern Mallev" hoax, its dynamiting of pretence and nonsense, its revelation of a whole world of credulous mental weaklings. Perhaps future poseurs will decide that posing is childish and their dupes will decide that undiscriminating discipleship is dull. They may even try to think for themselves, turning away from reflected glory to some little talent which is a poor thing but their own. If they have no love and understanding of the best, it will be better for their souls to keep away from false prophets and notoriety hunters.

Richmond, Surrey. AIDAN CLARKE.

MRS. LILLIE REED ZORTMAN, President, Pittsburgh Centre, reports: The attendance has kept up well considering the chaotic present. Our monthly contests show improvement in technique, subject material and that beyondness which is the true realm of poetry. Many of our members are writing song lyrics and some of our best composers are giving musical setting to their work. Some are writing for verse-speaking choirs.

I am pleased to be able to augment my subscription again, not only for the joy and thankfulness of the contacts I make at the Society's readings, but for the additional and poignant occasion of having received THE POETRY REVIEW in hospital this year, where I was able to gather round my bed such as were able to move and hold a miniature poetry reading. I think you would have appreciated and been touched to see suffering suspended for such a short space as it took to read the poems for a week of evenings, and the interested wonder at modern poetry with which the REVIEW is packed: FLORENCE LUCAS THOMPSON.

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I was surprised, upon reading Geoffrey Moore's "Portrait of the Artist as an Anarchist" in THE POETRY REVIEW, that no mention was made of the one poem of Read's that *is* great, "Song for the Spanish Anarchists," and I say that despite the fact that politically I am not pro-Read: also, no mention was made of his probable second-best, "Bombing Casualties": THOS. ASTORE, Romford.

I enjoyed every page of the May-June issue of POETRY REVIEW, which evidently cultivates a widespread interest in poetry. It contains a number of excellent poems, but the one that appealed to me most was "The Two Worlds," by Leslie Greene. I thought this a perfect gem. Its profound idea so poetically and impressively expressed, considerably impressed me. May THE POETRY REVIEW continue its long and successful career: T. ALLISON, Bilston.

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